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Memoirs

of the

Comte de Mercy Argenteau

Governor of Brabant and Grand Chamberlain
to King William I of the Netherlands

★ ★

The Events of 1830

Translated from the French, and Edited, with an

Comte Florimond de Mercy Argenteau

From the miniature by Vestier

New York
G. P. Putnam's Sons
The Knickerbocker Press
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Comte Raimond de Merey Crapelaar

From the miniature by Yeker

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Translated from the French, and Edited, with an
Introduction, by

George S. Hellman

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INTRODUCTION

PICTURE to yourselves this scene: In his stately home at Paris, Prince Talleyrand lies in death; Micard, the famous chemist, is preparing the body for burial; but this is to be no such task as with common mortals; rather shall the arts of the Egyptians be, as far as possible, revived. Into the veins of the great nobleman aromatic juices are introduced, while the assistants hang in wonder over the skill of Micard. But when the operation is over, the chemist (and he alone?) notes a strange blunder. The brain, which has been removed for elaborate treatment, still remains in the glass bowl wherein it was placed. To re-open the skull, to disturb anew that

reposeful and now fragrantly arranged body, were, (worse than desecration,) a confession of ineptitude that Micard is unwilling to make; he therefore takes the bowl with its marvellous contents, and unobserved, we hope, bears the object away with him. Once in the streets, he seeks a method for disposal, and finds it, by, to our mind, the most eloquent of coincidences, in the very sewer-opening through which the body of Robespierre, (when that bloody peak of the Mountain fell,) had been consigned to hidden waters. It is an episode which Victor Hugo, not without some errors in the recountal, has related, and which, in its present presentation, is vouched for by friends of Micard to whom, in later days, he narrated the affair. To such strange doom was destined the crafty brain which had, to a notable extent, shaped the careers of dynasties and the histories of nations, and,

towards the end of its labors, had conceived the idea of the inviolability and permanent neutrality of Belgium, maintained by the guarantees of England, Prussia, Austria, Russia and France.

The circumstances in the Netherlands culminating in the establishment of this new Belgium, form the subject matter of the memoirs that the Comte de Mercy Argenteau has entitled *The Events of 1830;* and this (hitherto unpublished) manuscript of the Grand Chamberlain of King William I is perhaps the most authentic and intimate document explaining the schism that took place in the Netherlands immediately after its neighbor France had, (maintaining its tradition as European leader in political liberalism,) swept away that most reactionary of Bourbon kings, Charles X. In pondering the many interviews which Mercy Argenteau had with the

King of the Netherlands in the hope of affecting the intolerant policy of that stubborn scion of the House of Orange, we are brought to the interesting conjecture as to whether, had the Count's advice been followed, the great world war of to-day would not have assumed another aspect. A more enlightened attitude towards his joint kingdom would have rendered unnecessary William's final reluctant compliance with the arrangements arrived at in the Conference of London, and there might have been no treaty regarding Belgium's independence, no "scrap of paper," whose violation by one of its signatories has challenged the moral judgment of mankind.

It may be recalled that after the entrance of the Allies into Paris had ended the Napoleonic Empire, (for The Hundred Days were inevitably the futile flame of a dying fire—the brilliant afterthought of a great author

Prince Talleyrand

whose tale is ended,) Napoleon's former Minister returned to his native land, then no longer a part of the French Empire. The Congress of Vienna had created the new Kingdom of the Netherlands, wherein Holland and the ancient Austrian province of Belgium were placed under the rule of the Dutch Prince, now bearing the title of King William I. The fifteen years which were to pass by before France again disturbed Europe through her demands for her truest heritage from the Revolution, were years in which the policies of the Austrian Chancellor, Prince Metternich, sought to compress the continent within the narrow moulds of "legitimate" rule. The conservative reaction that seized upon Europe after the overthrow of Napoleon, had, for a while, resulted in a condition of political stagnation, and liberal ideas were looked upon with hostility by the group of

monarchs of whom Metternich was the spokesman. Gradually, however, the illiberality of the Bourbons on the thrones of Spain, Italy and France, and of other "legitimate" rulers over the Russian, Austrian and Turkish empires, brought on insurrections. Revolts in Spain, Greece, Italy, Portugal and Poland gave evidence that growth of people demanding a voice in their own government could not be forever constrained within moulds shaped along the hard and ungracious lines of dynastic tyranny. The formula of Metternich was outlasting its usefulness; and when Canning, as Prime Minister of England, refused to countenance the policies of the Holy Alliance, and our own President Monroe laid down, in contravention to the authority of the Spanish Bourbons, the dictum that has assured the independence of South American states from European

rule, it became clear to all, except royal eyes congenitally blind, that the spirit of nationalism and of popular self-government was escaping effectively from the gilded cords whereby the Congress of Vienna had sought to bind it.

In this record of liberalizing movements, the Paris Revolution of July, 1830, has a most important place. Similar attempts in other countries during the preceding fifteen years had proved, mainly because of the strong hand of Austria, abortive; the Paris Revolution was the first to result, (and with comparatively little bloodshed,) in ponderable success. Its general influence on the rest of Europe was indirect; but at least in the case of Belgium it may be regarded as immediate.

France discarded the successor of Louis XVIII, because Charles X, during the six years of his reign, had, in his exercise of

censorship, his dissolution of the National Guard, his appointment of the abominated Minister Polignac, so violated the rights and feelings of his people that the Ordinances immediately preceding the Revolution of July, decreeing the suppression of the Press, the dissolution of the Chamber, and a radical change in the manner of election, were merely the final drops that brought the bitter cup to an overflowing. The injustices of King William of the Netherlands were less grievous than those of Charles X, but involved a similar mental obliquity and similar stubborn adherence to royal prerogatives. In a way, the problem of the Dutch King was more complicated: as ruler over a newly constituted kingdom, he did not have such strong reason to study, in its immediate personal application, the lessons which the fate of the earlier Bourbons should have taught

Charles X. Yet William I was reigning not over one people like that of France, but over two peoples, distinct in their religions, their languages, and their activities. Holland was a Protestant nation, its prosperity founded on commerce; Belgium was a Catholic nation, whose welfare was derived largely from agriculture and mining. The Northern people of the new Kingdom of the Netherlands spoke the Dutch language, while the Southern provinces used, for the most part, the tongue of their neighbor, France. The situation thus called for a monarch of liberal and elastic ideas, of a wise and conciliatory temper.

As Governor of South Brabant, during the years immediately succeeding the Congress of Vienna, Mercy Argenteau lost no time in endeavoring to instruct the King how ill-advised was the decree that sought to make the use of the Dutch language oblig-

atory in the Belgic provinces; and as early as 1818, the Count risked the monarch's displeasure in placing, unasked, in the hands of the King, a monograph showing that in imposing a foreign language upon any section of his people, William I was following a policy opposed to that of a long line of monarchs. William's reluctance to accept the ideas of the Governor of South Brabant, finally led Mercy Argenteau to resign this office, but he was prevailed upon to continue his court post of Grand Chamberlain, and it is in this capacity that he sought, (prior to, and during the difficult days of 1830,) to guide the King's opinions into broader channels. The difficulties which beset the Government first became thoroughly accentuated in 1825, when laws (regarding public instruction) were passed in violent opposition to public opinion in the Catholic provinces of the South. Not

alone were private ecclesiastic establishments closed, but the King went to the absurd length of decreeing that no public office should be held by any young men who had pursued their studies in a foreign country. The very excess of these measures led the King finally to reconsider them, and he signed decrees rendering optional the use of the Dutch language and attendance at the College of Philosophy, the institution which he had founded in opposing Catholic education. But the publication of these decrees he continually delayed; and the more strenuously his Belgian subjects demanded them, the more stubbornly he kept them locked in his desk.

Such, then, was the situation at the end of 1829: a people demanding freedom in many directions, and a King hesitant to accord important rights, lest any but minor

concessions might be regarded as un-royal yielding to popular clamor.

Mercy Argenteau has included in an Appendix to his Memoirs two documents which should be consulted in the Appendix of the present volume. The Royal Message of December 11th, 1829, gives suggestive indication of the irritating problems that were soon to find their solution in civil war, and displays, also, the indetermined and vacillating attitude of the Government. The freedom of the press is praised in principle, but attacked in practice; reference is made to the Concordat with the Pope that shall settle the difficult question of the appointments of Roman Catholic bishops, and of Catholic instruction, but the King speaks in a threatening tone of "exaggerated religious zeal," and we have but to refer to Mercy Argenteau's personal interview, a few weeks earlier, with Pius VIII, to

realize how little the King's Catholic subjects in the Southern provinces had to hope from the long negotiations between the Netherlands Government and the Holy See. In all governmental departments the Protestant element was preponderant.

Several reforms we do, however, note in the Royal Message. Communal and provincial authority is given wider scope, and the principle of the non-removability of judges is assured. But the crucial demand for ministerial responsibility to the two Chambers that form the States-General is dismissed in a cloud of verbiage, which, despite its conciliatory phraseology, still leaves clear the King's determination to exercise in person the final authority in national legislation.

The second document is the Circular Letter, sent by the Minister of Justice, Van Maanen, to all the officers of the law,

as an accompaniment of the Royal Message. The tenor of this missive is the best proof of Mercy Argenteau's wisdom in advising the King, after the Royal Message had failed to quiet civic disturbances, of the necessity of Van Maanen's removal from office.

Various other complexities of the situation, such as the contradictory absence of ministerial responsibility to the Chambers, coupled with the lack of constitutional authority of the King to dissolve the Chambers, made matters increasingly difficult, and Mercy Argenteau was entirely logical in writing to the King, during the early months of 1830, that "the royal power must either bend before the superlative power of the opposition, or the royal power will be able to extricate itself only by a very dangerous method—that which is called *coup d'état.*"

It was a copy of this letter that Mercy

Argenteau, soon thereafter, showed to General Fagel, the Minister of the Netherlands at the Court of Charles X. Fagel agrees with the King's Grand Chamberlain that William's stubbornness and indecision are to be deplored, and trusts that the frankness of Mercy Argenteau may lead the Dutch King to immediate reforms in his Government.

There were in the diplomatic service at Paris at this time, two other men to whom Mercy Argenteau pays special tribute; one of these was the Prussian Minister, Baron Werther, and the other, the Russian Ambassador, Pozzo di Borgo, whose signature we shall later see appended to the now unforgettable treaty in which, at London in 1839, the inviolable neutrality of Belgium was guaranteed by the five Great Powers of Europe. Both the Russian and Prussian Ministers Plenipotentiary thoroughly un-

derstood the trend of events, but it was Pozzo di Borgo whose vision went deepest and furthest of all the foreign diplomats accredited to the Court of Charles X.

Almost ten years had elapsed since Mercy Argenteau's old master, the great Napoleon, had died; and if Mercy Argenteau had ever born ill-will towards Pozzo di Borgo for his long enmity against Napoleon, it was an ill-will now relegated to the irretrievable past. Carlo Andrea Pozzo di Borgo had been born in Corsica in 1868, and was in youth the friend of the young Bonaparte, his junior by but a year. When, however, as Corsican representative in the French National Assembly of 1791–1792, Pozzo acted in opposition to the policies favored by Bonaparte, and continued in his espousal of the cause of the Corsican patriot, Paoli, the rift widened between him and the Bonapartes, until, in 1798, it

was Pozzo who used all his endeavors to effect the first alliance of Austria and Russia against France. To Pozzo, also, (whose extradition Napoleon demanded in vain from Emperor Francis, in 1809,) was due the advice which led Emperor Alexander into the Russian War of 1812, so fatal to Napoleon; and the downfall of the Corsican Emperor finally and inevitably followed the oft-quoted declaration of his boyhood friend, the Corsican diplomatist, that "the Allies made war not on France, but on Napoleon." What a familiar ring these words have for us, when we recall the phrase of the President of the United States concerning a war not against the German people, but its Government!

During the remainder of his life, Pozzo di Borgo played an important part in several events of high international significance; and how quick was his insight, how keen

his foresight, is shown by his statement to Mercy Argenteau, after the Grand Chamberlain of King William of the Netherlands had his remarkable interview with Charles X.

This interview was readily obtainable, not alone because of the courteous relationship which existed between the King and the Count, but also because the King cherished warm regard for the memory of that Comte de Mercy Argenteau who had been the guardian of Marie Antoinette. Yet the startling candor with which Charles X conducted his conversation with the Belgian diplomat was far beyond the expectations of his auditor. The French monarch begins with congratulating Mercy Argenteau because "your King has at last become a King"; referring in this statement to William's declaration of December 11th, 1829,[1]

[1] *See* Appendix

that he alone had the right to interpret the constitution.—"Royalty," said the Bourbon King, "is menaced everywhere and on all sides. . . . What you call charter and constitution are not in accord with royal power, which is one by itself, and must remain so for the safety of society which, without it, were condemned to perish. . . . We must free ourselves from this situation at any cost."

With these words, (and we must remember that the fateful month of July was still many weeks away,) the last of the elder line of Bourbons had practically disclosed to Mercy Argenteau his intention to effect a *coup d'état;* and the astonished and perturbed Count, well realizing what such an eventuality would mean for his own land, hastens to discuss the situation with Pozzo di Borgo, "the soul of the foreign diplomatic corps at Paris."

"What," cries the Russian Ambassador, on hearing the pregnant tidings; "did the King say this to you? . . . He has never said anything like it to anyone before! . . . He will carry out this *coup d'état*, and in so doing, he will destroy himself. . . . Be assured, the Bourbons are doomed!"

The last word of advice that Mercy Argenteau received from Pozzo di Borgo was to urge the King of the Netherlands to abandon the dangerous road of royal tyranny and to put a stop to the discontent of his subjects.

Armed with the coinciding opinions of the Austrian and Prussian Ministers at Paris, and with the new and unprecedented information so startlingly obtained from the King of France, Mercy Argenteau hurries to Brussels where he has a fearless interview with King William. But that monarch is hard to move, and stubbornly adheres to

the position that the Great Powers which, (at the Congress of Vienna,) constituted his Kingdom, will not allow any rupture of the Netherlands.—But the political philosophy of Metternich was losing its vitality, and the Conference of London was soon to prove to King William that not the most legitimate of Kings could much longer flout the constitutional rights of his subjects. Although it took almost nine years before the final arrangements solved all the difficulties between Holland and Belgium, the Great Powers whose representatives met in 1830 at London immediately recognized the acts that had taken place in the Netherlands, allowing the Southern provinces to constitute themselves into the separate State of Belgium.

The many events that Mercy Argenteau recounts between his interview in March, with Charles X, and the accession of Leo-

pold as first King of the Belgians, throw vivid side-lights on the struggle which finally overthrew the authority of King William.

Among the graphic scenes of 1830 that Mercy Argenteau pictures is one which took place at the Château de Rambouillet, when the Duchesse de Berry, the daughter-in-law of Charles X, first heard the news of the Revolution in Paris. Herself the daughter of a King, she, with royal courage, was eager to mount her horse, and, her son in her arms, to address the National Guard in the wish to place herself at their head and suppress the uprising. Another scene in its way fully as significant, had taken place at the race-course at Brussels, where the Prince of Orange welcomed as glorious news the tidings of the French King's *coup d'état;* but Mercy Argenteau, "absorbed in sad presentiments," could not join in the Prince's elation.

INTRODUCTION

The accession of Louis Philippe of the House of Orleans, the younger branch of the Bourbons, offered opportunities to King William of which that headstrong monarch failed to take advantage. While, following the lead of the Great Powers, the Netherlands recognized without delay the new "Citizen-King," William did little to satisfy the demands of his subjects whose spirit of independence had received a great impetus through the events of July in France. The King of the Netherlands continued his policy of procrastination and half-way measures. Whereupon the disturbances in his Southern provinces swiftly increased, and it soon became manifest that there must be either administrative separation between the two great parts of his Kingdom, or civil war. Mercy Argenteau's advice to grant the Belgian provinces legislative independence, might even then have been

followed, with William remaining as the constitutional King of the two nations; but, "lacking the statesman's insight, and a stranger to all questions involved in statesmanship, and, above all, unable to understand the spirit of the time, King William was to remain the pawn of events."

The contradictory courses pursued by the Prince of Orange and his father only made matters worse, and every step that was taken, every concession that was granted, was either unintelligent or too late; and there were to be evil days for the Dutch and the Belgians before the Conference of London perhaps saved Europe from general war, in supporting Prince Leopold of Saxe-Coburg as the ruler over those disturbed provinces in whose affairs Mercy Argenteau had played so enlightened a part.

Before concluding these introductory notes, it were perhaps well to follow in swift

chronological review the steps which ended at the throne of a new Belgium. The Royal Message of December 11th, 1829, led to increased opposition, violently evinced by the Belgian newspapers during January and February, 1830. The editors De Potter and Tielemans were sent into exile. After the coronation on the 7th of August of Louis Philippe, the excitement increased, and on the 25th, the Brussels mob set fire to the house of the hated Minister Van Maanen. On the 26th there was blood shed in the streets; on the 29th a deputation went to make demands of the King, who received them a few days later, and refused to dismiss his Minister. On that same day, however, the Prince of Orange went to Brussels and issued a friendly but ineffectual proclamation. A few weeks later his brother, Prince Frederick, approached Brussels at the head of his troops.

Fighting took place between the Dutch and the Belgians, and, at the end of three days, the troops withdrew. The dead and wounded numbered between four and five thousand. A week later, (October 4th) the Provisional Government at Brussels determined to constitute the Belgian Provinces into a separate State. King William appealed to Austria, Russia, Prussia and England for troops, but France objected in a menacing way. Talleyrand then began to pull the wires, and on November 4th, the Conference of London had its initial meeting. Towards the end of that month the Dutch attack on Antwerp utterly alienated the Belgians from the House of Orange, and ended the chances of the Prince Royal, (who had previously made advances to the Provisional Government,) of becoming the King of the Belgians, although the London Conference continued to advocate

his candidacy. Various other princes were suggested (Louis Philippe declining the crown for his son, the Duc de Nemours); until finally, on June 4, 1831, Prince Leopold of Saxe-Coburg was chosen by the Belgians.

If we would have extended information concerning many of the episodes at the London Conferences during 1830–1839, concluding with the treaties signed and ratified by Holland, Belgium, the five Great Powers and the Confederation of the Rhine, we can, with interesting results, turn to the memoirs of Prince Talleyrand, (sometime Grand Chamberlain of Napoleon,) who had given Mercy Argenteau his earliest instructions when the young Count entered into the services of the Emperor of the French. There, we can learn of the cogent reasons why France and Prussia, Austria, England and Russia, saw the vital necessity of main-

taining order in the Low Countries. While to-day we think of the territory between France and Prussia as a barrier between German militarism and French unaggressiveness, Belgium, in 1830 was considered by the Powers as a barrier of quite another kind. Men's minds still held in fresh memory the disturbing ambitions of Napoleonic France, and when Prussia signed the treaty that had as one of its main purposes the permanent neutrality and inviolability of Belgium, the Prussian King regarded this agreement as an act of peace for all Europe, but most immediately so for his own territories; while Louis Philippe gladly assented to an arrangement allaying whatever fears or suspicions might still have lurked in the minds of his fellow monarchs, regarding France's desire to annex Belgium.

Strange, how far differently events have

NOTICE HISTORIQUE

sur les événements

de

1830

dans les provinces méridionales

du Royaume des

Pays-Bas,

par le

COMTE DE MERCY ARGENTEAU,

Grand Chambellan du Roi Guillaume 1er

Au Château d'Argenteau.

1860

Facsimile of Titlepage

taken their course! The armies of Germany, not of France, hold to-day the Belgian land. The pledge that she gave in 1839, Prussia, in 1914, with ruthless hand brushed aside; and now the world is struggling in the net of universal war. When it will end, who shall say? But this at least, we shall not doubt: never until the land for whose liberties Mercy Argenteau pleaded so earnestly comes again into its own.

GEORGE S. HELLMAN.

UPPER SARANAC,
September, 1917.

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The Events of 1830

The Events of 1830

I

It is my desire to relate my recollections of the events which took place in 1830, in the Southern provinces of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, established in 1815; and of the circumstances which contributed most to bringing about those events; and this, by co-ordinating notes that I wrote at different periods, and by recalling the serious talks I was privileged to have had, on particular occasions, with King William I.

But, first of all, in order to have a just idea of the state of the public mind and the conditions of affairs at Brussels in 1830, I must go further back with my narrative.

I had, but a short time before, towards the end of September, 1829, returned from a sojourn of some three years in Italy.

The King, wishing to give me a proof of his esteem and good-will, had, in the latter part of December of that year, bestowed upon me the Grand Cross of his Order of the Lion of the Netherlands.

I was staying alone at the Château de Vierset, busy in arranging my affairs, while the members of my family were establishing themselves at Paris, where they were going to pass the winter.

Prevented by the heavy snows in the roads from reaching The Hague, I wrote to the Grand Marshal, Comte de Reede, asking him to be so kind as to apprize the King of my gratitude; and, in this letter, (which I knew would be seen by His Majesty,) I was careful to insert the following phrase: "This high favor, which the King

is pleased to grant me, is all the more precious to me, in that I like to regard it as a proof of the justice with which His Majesty is graciously willing to regard my opinions."

For several years we had not always agreed on measures that the King deemed necessary to adopt, under pretext of conciliating the discontented factions in the Southern provinces. These measures had to do with laws regarding animals; the use of the Dutch language in all public decrees; the establishment of a College of Philosophy, patterned on the principles of the General Seminary founded by Emperor Joseph II; etc. When I was Governor of Brabant, I had even been so bold as to take upon myself the task of sending the King a Memorandum on the occasion of the decree rendering the usage of the Dutch language obligatory in the Southern provinces. I sought to show him that neither

Charles the Fifth, nor Philip II, nor Maria Theresa had ever thought of attempting anything similar; that Charles the Fifth's act of abdication had been read aloud in French, in the Grand Hall of the City Hall at Brussels; that all correspondence under Philip II had been written in French; that the judgments which had condemned to death the Prince of Orange, and the Comtes d'Egmont and de Horne had been rendered in French; that Maria Theresa had established a Chair of French at the University of Louvain; that the administrative correspondence under the Austrian government had always been in French; and that Napoleon himself, and likewise that Louis XIV, had never demanded that the Alsatians should give up the German language in their public and judiciary acts.

II

I HAD not pleased the King, in putting into his hands, in 1818, a work for which I had not been asked; and the usage of the Dutch language was made obligatory in all public acts.

A little later I begged the King to permit me to resign my office as Governor

His Majesty wished to nominate me for membership in the First Chamber of the States-General, but I was not of requisite age. He substituted for this appointment that of State Councillor in Ordinary Service. I did not accept this, expressing my desire to confine myself, thenceforth, to my post as Grand Chamberlain, if that were agreeable to the King; but I did not delay offering my resignation from my

position at Court, when I saw that the King was persisting in following a wrong course wherein, from my point of view, he was becoming more and more involved; and as I was confident that the first important political event in Europe would directly affect him.

His consideration towards me increased despite my opposition to his ideas; and when, at the beginning of 1830, I went to The Hague to thank him for the Grand Ribbon of the Order of the Lion of the Netherlands (which I had just received), the King said to me, reverting to the phrase that I have just quoted from my letter: "Yes, Monsieur le Comte, you can and you ought to regard this decoration, which I am delighted to see you wearing, as a proof of the justice with which I regard your opinions."

III

I SET out for The Hague, snow and the frozen rivers notwithstanding; and, at Brussels, chance brought me together with the Internuncio, Monseigneur Cappacini, bound for the same destination. We continued our journey together, in the coupé of a diligence, reserved for us two. This service had been organized for those periods when the rivers, closed by ice, rendered crossing in coaches impossible. Diligences were, in these cases, changed at each crossing of the river, thus rendering communication between the two great divisions of the Kingdom very difficult.

I was happy to have this distinguished prelate as a travelling companion, both because of his affable character, and his

intelligence and great skilfulness in all matters. He had been a pupil of Cardinal Consalvi. A keen and trained observer, he was a man who thoroughly understood the countries to which he had been sent—their needs, their instincts, the officers of his own Government (as well as of the Government to which he was accredited). Monseigneur Cappacini had for twelve years performed the functions of Internuncio, alternately at Brussels and The Hague. The particular object of this prelate, being, at that time, to put into execution the articles of the new Concordat recently signed at Rome, (and whose introduction had met with difficulties from the Government,) Monseigneur Cappacini was the man to conquer these difficulties, if conquered they could be. But the Government, I must admit, showed ill-will and was not acting in good faith; so that Pope

Pius VIII complained to me, in a special audience which His Holiness did me the honor to grant, and of which I shall presently speak.

Evidently we were approaching a crisis. If the King persevered in the system of government which he had adopted, and which could be defined in no way, (for, speaking properly, it was neither constitutional, nor representative, since there was no ministerial responsibility to the Chambers; the election to the States-General was procured by the States-Provinces, and through an excess of incoherence, the Constitution did not permit the Royal Power to dissolve the Chamber of Deputies, except under the name of the Second Chamber of the States-General)—it was evident, I say, to the eyes of every thinking person, that the first revolutionary movement arising in a neighboring country, would soon

re-act upon our land, overthrowing us who had been unable to fasten our roots into the soil, and who had laid no foundation in a Kingdom of recent formation, composed of two very distinct nationalities, separated as greatly by religion, customs, language and habits, as by the arm of the dividing sea.

This does not mean, let us note, that under other governmental and legislative conditions, these two States, reunited, yet separated as far as administration was concerned, could not alone have, under the same King, existed perfectly well together, but could also have constituted a prosperous and happy entity, endowed with richness of soil, with industries developed to the highest degree of power, and with enormous financial resources, sustained by great trade and wealthy colonies.

Yes, the Kingdom of the Netherlands,—

as it had been constituted by the Treaty of Vienna in 1815,—might have been called to play an important part in Europe under a capable and enlightened government; and the central position that it occupies on the map of Europe should, quite naturally, have made it a gage of peace, for all the Great Powers would have been interested in its conservation.

While we were wheeling along at night over the rough and deserted road from Antwerp to Breda, Monseigneur Cappacini and I resumed this sad topic of earlier conversations. Day began to dawn as we arrived at the passage over the Moerdyck. We left our diligence there, and crossed on a frail bark, which manœuvred about between the pieces of ice, so that it took us no less than two hours to make this crossing. On the other side, we awaited another public vehicle which was to take us to the

passage of the Meuse, in front of Rotterdam. The Meuse, at this point, reaches its greatest width and is called the Wahal. It was still covered with thick ice which we traversed on foot; although not without trouble, and with even some danger, for it had commenced to thaw, and we were the last who were allowed to cross on foot.

IV

AFTER our arrival at The Hague, Monseigneur Cappacini and I frequently sought each other, and often met. Unfortunately, we had only sad presentiments and grievous thoughts to exchange; and our distressing journey (of a kind unimaginable nowadays) added to our unpleasant forebodings concerning the approaching dissolution of these Provinces, which Nature, it would seem, had, in truth, not formed for a life of union.

I found the King in quite another mood than that in which, several months earlier, I had left him at Brussels.

The truth is, that a revolutionary movement seemed to threaten the Southern Provinces, and that there was prevalent there a great discontent, maintained by the peti-

tion on the subject of public instruction. The King seemed willing to enter upon a course of concession and conciliation, but he did not know how to decide upon anything.

I have said elsewhere that the King, in my opinion, had not always acted with fairness, and that two years earlier I had even been led to resign my post of Grand Chamberlain, a resignation which His Majesty was unwilling to accept. Having been called to The Hague at that time, the King, in conferring with me, had gone to the length of saying: "Think this over carefully. If you persist in your resolve to leave me, under these circumstances in which we find ourselves, you are going to place me in the wrong in the opinion of those already very hostile to me at Brussels and in the neighboring provinces."

This strange avowal made it impossible

for me to insist further; but I profited by the occasion to enlarge on the difficulties that he was creating for himself, unless he changed his system of government.

The King then reproached me, because I had reached the age requisite for admission to the First Chamber of the States-General, and yet persisted in my wish not to become a member. I told him that my refusal was due to the fact that as his Government was not a parliamentary one, with ministerial responsibility, I could not, in my position of Grand Officer of his Household, and with my views contrary to his on so many points in connection with the administration, (as he was perfectly well aware)—I could not, I said, accept a post which would place me in the position of having to oppose in the name of the King, in the mornings, at the Tribune, a project of law presented by his irresponsible Minis-

ters, and of coming, at evening, to take my place at His Majesty's table, in my capacity of Grand Chamberlain.

"In England," I went on to say, "a Grand Officer of the Crown, if the party to which he belongs is no longer in power, resigns from his Court position. Does Your Majesty insist that I should become a member of the First Chamber of the States-General? In that case, Your Majesty will accept my resignation from the post of Grand Chamberlain; and all will be well. I shall then be free to defend my opinions at the Tribune, without fearing personal offence to the King; and Your Majesty knows that, since 1825, our respective opinions, as regards the Government, have never been in accord—so, rather, do not nominate me for membership in the First Chamber, but permit me—as you have often hitherto—to continue to offer

opposition, at times, in your private study, in maintaining my high office of Grand Chamberlain." Whereupon, the King replied, "Since you feel this way about it, let us remain as we are."

And thus it was to be.

V

ALTHOUGH I had been at The Hague several days, His Majesty had not yet found opportunity to talk with me about recent events at Brussels, and what was brewing elsewhere. His Majesty was ever obstinately bent on regarding the commotion of public spirit at Brussels merely as agitation attributable more or less to ill-will.

At last the day was appointed, and I presented myself at an early hour in the King's study where he was awaiting me. After having invited me to be seated at his table, which was loaded with documents, the King thus began the conversation:

"I wish you to tell me clearly and very frankly your opinion of the situation in which we find ourselves, particularly at

Brussels. I wish to rely on what you are going to tell me. Here I find myself tossed about among all parties; in your Southern provinces, it is the Catholics who pretend that their rights are injured and their liberty trampled upon; here in the Northern provinces, it is something else; and these opinions are always in opposition. I no longer know where I stand, or what I should do."

"Sire, you place me in great embarrassment. I must return to the origin of the evil, and attack the very principles of your Government;—those, most particularly, which you have put in practice since 1825. But in order to do this, I have need of great liberty of speech so that I may be able to express my thoughts well; and I fear, Sire, that my phrases may not always be as measured as I should wish them to be. However, you may be assured that I shall

not reach the point of forgetting where I am, and in whose presence I have the honor to speak."

"Mon Dieu! don't restrain yourself in the least," answered the King, with a slightly sardonic smile that often played about his lips; "I am not spoiled, I assure you, especially since that time when every kind of accusation was addressed to me in pamphlets and newspapers in opposition to my supposed projects of making the Southern provinces Protestant; and what not besides! Speak, and speak freely; I know you well enough never to doubt your intentions."

I had named 1825 as the point of departure in the fatal path upon which the King had entered. From this period dated, first, the founding of the College of Philosophy, and secondly, the law regarding public instruction, both of which acts were op-

King William of the Netherlands

posed by preponderant opinion in the Southern provinces, and against which, the clergy, headed especially by Monseigneur Van Bommel, had strenuously protested. Van Bommel, a Dutchman by birth, had just published a remarkable work, entitled *The Three Chapters*, a work received with the fullest approval by all intelligent men, who desired nothing but liberty in the matter of public instruction. In this respect the work was perfectly in accord with the fundamental law of the land; and many Protestant attachés at the Court—such as the Grand Marshal, Comte de Reede, and Comte Vanderduyn, Grand Master of the Queen's Household, to whose attention I brought this pamphlet,—heartily approved its principles.

The King had carried exclusion in the matter of public instruction to such an extent, (and this, with the view of favoring

the State colleges and schools,) that he had relentlessly closed all private ecclesiastic establishments, even the schools of the Brothers of the Christian Doctrine, which were founded in France and elsewhere for the purpose of diffusing morals among the people.

Not content with these violent and arbitrary measures, administered as only the most despotic Government could possibly have done, the King had gone so far as to issue a decree in which he declared that every young man who had pursued his studies in a foreign country was unqualified to exercise any public function in the Netherlands; a measure which, according to the Fundamental Law, was not at all within the Royal Power.

I was among those who allowed themselves completely to disregard this decree. The King knew that my two sons had not

attended any of the governmental schools or colleges; and that they were in Paris at boarding-schools connected with the University. He merely chose not to speak to me of this matter. One day, however, addressing one of my friends, attached to the Court of the Prince of Orange, he said:

"What would you think, Monsieur, of a man, a Grand Officer of my Household, who allows his children to be educated in a foreign country?"

The gentleman, to whom he spoke—a man of spirit and rather caustic—realizing to whom allusion was made, replied to His Majesty:

"Oh! the reason would appear to me to be quite simple:—he must probably have realized that the education is better there than elsewhere."

I mention this fact to show how far the aberration (to speak plainly) of the King's

mind had spread, in connection with those despotic measures which served only to alienate thinking men.

Not without reason, then, in wishing to show the origin of the causes which had contributed most to lead William I on a path which would without fail bring him to downfall, did I hark back to the year 1825. That year, I repeat, marks the origin of the distrust, the disaffection and the troubles, whence revolution was soon to spring.

The spirit of opposition kept on increasing in the Second Chamber of the States-General. The decree which rendered the usage of the Dutch tongue obligatory in all public acts was one of the first causes of this discontent. I reminded the King on this occasion, of the work, to which in 1817, when I was Governor of the Province of South Brabant, I had devoted myself in

order to divert him from that fatal measure, a measure which had no precedent in any of the former governments, and which ought absolutely to be revoked.

VI

THE King felt so thoroughly that there was nothing else to be done, that, already several months earlier, he had signed a decree which rendered the usage of the Dutch language optional; and a second decree which similarly made optional, attendance at the College of Philosophy, an institution whose form had been so justly condemned, especially from the Catholic point of view.

Here is the place to relate a private conversation that I had the honor to have with Pope Pius VIII, at the time of my departure from Rome, in 1829. His Holiness spoke to me with great moderation and much wisdom concerning the reproaches which he had addressed to the Government

of the King of the Netherlands, not only regarding the instructions of the Minister of the Interior, in reference to the publication of the Concordat, but, in general, concerning the obstacles imposed upon the exercise of religion, and, in particular, of the system adopted in 1825, regarding the establishment of the College of Philosophy at Louvain, and the matter of public instruction.

"Let us speak frankly, Monsieur le Comte," said the Holy Father to me. "Under Maria Theresa the Belgians led a happy life. They enjoyed great privileges, which they jealously guarded. Emperor Joseph II, who succeeded her, was the first to violate these privileges, and in consequence taught the Belgians to employ means of resistance to his wrongful will.

"Let us admit that events following the accession of King William I to the throne

of the Netherlands, and particularly those of later years, have been little conducive to bringing harmony among his subjects. Controversy has arisen on the question of the Fundamental Law; rights are being disputed; complaints made; claims advanced. On the other side, there is insistence on not making any concessions. Distrust pervades both parties. . . . Whose is the fault? . . . For the last three years, not an act has been proposed, not a resolution adopted, in the affairs between the Concordat and the King of the Netherlands, without my being consulted. My predecessor, Leo XII, took my advice; I am conversant with the whole situation; nothing is unknown to me; I continue the work of Leo XII, and—God is my witness—I continue it in good faith. But with what obstacles! No sooner are acts signed than there is a circular of instructions from your

Minister of the Interior, passed from hand to hand, which threatens to destroy all that has been done. For his object is to retard the publication of the agreements of this Concordat; while the King's Ambassador here is commissioned to tell me how happy the King is at this important act which will put an end to the religious dissensions throughout the land. And the fact is that that which was solemnly promised is not carried out. Nevertheless, I am asked to name Bishops. I say: Fulfill your obligations, and I will nominate them. This I do not do. . . . Your King proposes three of his subjects for Bishoprics; they are men well chosen; I lose no time in naming them as Bishops. . . . Despite that, no progress is made. . . . There we stop; and I still await the fulfillment of agreements contracted for, signed."

The Pope then spoke to me of the Prelate

Cappacini, whom he had appointed Internuncio at Brussels and The Hague. The Holy Father spoke very highly of his distinguished talents, his cast of mind, his uprightness of character and his perfect intelligence in handling affairs; Monsieur Cappacini was trained, added the Pope, under the direction of Cardinal Consalvi, who had been, the Holy Father was glad to say, one of his own intimate friends.

"Well!" continued His Holiness, in a more animated tone, "Monseigneur Cappacini obtains nothing. . . . I believed, as did my predecessor, that I could rely on the word of a King, a sacred word which should ever be scrupulously observed. I, in the Chair of S^{t} Peter, am merely the guardian of a trust, and this trust is the Faith, the Doctrine of the Church. Intact I must transmit it; I cannot let it be touched."

The Pope then came to speak of the College of Philosophy:—

"There may be some good points to this institution," His Holiness said, "but its form, first of all, is bad: it offends our principles, and therefore, it would be vain to attempt to gain my consent to it. . . . The King has been very ill inspired. There was a better course to follow than the founding of his College of Philosophy on the basis of the General Seminary of Emperor Joseph II. He could have quite simply come to an understanding with me, the Head of the Church, concerning the establishment of a College for higher ecclesiastical studies, which would have furnished a great capacity for usefulness; and thus, together, we could have done a great work."

I had only a few objections to suggest to the Holy Father during the course of this

conversation, which it was my duty to report to the King, upon my return, and which contributed somewhat, I believe, to his decree by virtue of which attendance at the College of Philosophy became optional. This was tantamount to announcing the suppression of his earlier decree.

VII

I HAVE already said that the King, some two months previously, had signed decrees rendering optional the use of Dutch, and attendance at the College of Philosophy,—thus, in other words, annulling his former acts. I had been informed of this by the Minister of the Interior, Mons^r De Lacoste, a wise and enlightened man, who urged me to use all my efforts in influencing the King to publish these decrees which he was still keeping locked up in his desk.

Wherefore this resistance to vows so sincerely, so solemnly pronounced? Why this delay? Why not gratify those wishes, whose expediency the King himself had recognized, inasmuch as he had signed the decrees, and since he no longer had any

motive for keeping them as private documents in his desk?

Showing him that I was informed of this fact, I begged His Majesty no longer to delay their publication, which would show his willingness to make just concessions after he had recognized them as expedient, and which would revive hopes from other points of view. But his reply was ever the same:

"I shall never yield in the face of circumstances while there is any appearance of a demand imposed upon me."

This was not the first time that such a reply had been made to me, nor was it the first time that I answered:

"Granted, Sire. One should never yield to imperious demands; but the better way to avoid finding oneself in such a situation is to foresee it, before adopting a measure whose issue may be serious."

With the Fundamental Law of the land as their weapon, the people were with full right demanding liberty in public instruction.

VIII

We were at the end of February of 1830, the year which was to see the downfall of the Bourbons in France, and the violent separation of Holland from the ancient Belgian provinces which had been annexed in 1815.

I was planning to rejoin my family at Paris. Hearing that I was contemplating a stay at Brussels, where, among all classes of society, great disturbance was prevalent owing to the petitions relative to the question of public instruction, the King asked me to observe events closely, and to report to him directly concerning the state of affairs and public feeling. In our last conversation at The Hague, I had already opposed his manner of viewing and handling

the subject of this petition, which was only the inherent use of the liberty which every man has, to express his opinions and to make known his wishes. From this point of view, I expressed my regret at having seen the King adopt severe measures against certain persons of high rank who should have been warned by me, in obedience to the King's commands, and in my position as Grand Chamberlain, to refrain from presenting themselves at Court.

In the early part of March, before I left The Hague, the King, through his Minister of the Interior, had informed me of his intention of appointing me President of the Commission at the Exposition of the Products of National Industry, about to be held at Brussels. To this appointment he attached great importance; and I had replied that I was at His Majesty's service. At the moment of my departure, the King

graciously desired to thank me for what His Majesty called the co-operation which I had been kindly willing to grant him in these circumstances.

After my arrival at Brussels, I took steps to occupy myself seriously in the important matter of those days—the petition—and to carry out the intentions of the King to the best of my ability. Everyone there was ardently interested in the question of public instruction; I met many people who were in a position to give me the most reliable and exact information; and I was soon entirely convinced of the necessity of advising the King to use means, as soon as possible, of putting a stop to the existing state of affairs, and of calming a disturbance that was steadily increasing.

In the special report that I hastened to submit to His Majesty, I tried, as best I could, to picture the situation to the King

in its true colors, without exaggeration, but in such way as to make an impression upon his mind. I was convinced that it was necessary, at all cost, and without further delay, to make notable modifications in the existing system of Government.

I wished, first of all, to go to the very bottom of things, and, above all, to force into the King's mind the idea that a useful reform, to be successfully carried out, would have to be radical; that half-way measures would serve no purpose, partial concessions would appease no one, and would hardly soothe the agitation; on the contrary, they would but serve to encourage new demands. I therefore asked the immediate withdrawal of the law concerning public instruction, as the only means of putting an immediate stop to the petition; and the publication forthwith of the royal decree, granting the option of using the French language in

public acts, as a just satisfaction of the pressing demands of the Southern provinces, so considerable a part of the Kingdom of the Netherlands. Then frankly approaching considerations of another order, I tried to show the necessity of establishing what would constitute really a representative Government,—ministerial responsibility to the Chambers. Such ministerial responsibility, in all acts of Government, would be the only means of protecting Royalty in times of trouble.

I begged the King to note that the omission in the Constitution of the right to dissolve the Legislative Chambers (a right which should always be inherent in royal power) was a regrettable lack, placing Royalty in permanent and imminent danger; and I gave the following as a striking example: the right to elect members of the Second Chamber of the States-General

belonged to the States-Provinces that were elected by those who had paid taxes which qualified them to vote.

"Your Majesty surely knows," I added, "that in the Southern provinces the spirit of opposition is gaining ground each year, and, as a consequence, dominates the election of deputies to the Second Chamber of the States-General. As the elections to the States-Provinces are similarly made, it is easy to see, how before long, the day is coming when the forces of opposition in the States-Provinces will pass over into the rank of the Second Chamber of the States-General; and as the King has not the power to dissolve the Legislative Chambers, one asks: What will happen?—One of two things, whose consequences will be inevitable: The royal power must either bend before the superlative power of the opposition, (and this will be the triumph of

radicalism, if we follow the down-hill path);—or the royal power will be able to extricate itself only by a very dangerous method—that which is called a *coup d'état.*"

IX

As soon as my letter was despatched I set out for Paris. I had kept a copy of it, and this I hastened to bring to the attention of General Robert Fagel, Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary of the King of the Netherlands. He thanked me for it. General Baron Fagel, my old friend, was a man of spirit, wise, capable, impartial and deeply devoted to King William I, whose mistakes, however, he deplored. He thanked me profusely for having used such firm and truthful language, which he judged was of a nature to make an impression on the King; although he did not conceal his fear that my words might have no result on the King's indecision of spirit, whose blindness the General so much regretted.

The situation in France, was, at this time, becoming threatening, although this was perceived by only a small number of men accustomed to reflect in a dispassionate manner, free from that party spirit which ever leads people astray.

There were only two men in the foreign diplomatic service at Paris who foresaw the danger hovering over the throne and society. Nor were they able to understand the danger, but they had suspicion of what it was, and were computing beforehand its serious consequences.

One of these was the Russian Ambassador, Pozzo di Borgo, (a Corsican by birth,) and a shrewd man of brilliant mind. He had been a member of the Assembly of the States-General in France; later, on becoming an Emigré, he had lived a long time at Vienna, which he left to enter the Russian service. He had become a Lieu-

tenant-General, and, later, Ambassador to Paris.

The other was the Prussian Minister, Baron von Werther, a clear-visioned and intelligent man, somewhat rough in his manners, yet having that penetrating glance which comes from knowledge of men and affairs, coupled with that power of observation which foresees events and their import.

X

On arriving at Paris, I asked permission (in accordance with custom) to present myself to the King. Charles X had known my family, especially Comte Florimond de Mercy Argenteau, (my relative,) who had for twenty-five years been the Austrian Ambassador to France, and who had presided at the marriage of Marie Antoinette to Louis XVI, then Dauphin. Towards Count Florimond the unfortunate Princess had shown almost daughterly affection and unlimited confidence, to which my relative responded with entire devotion. The numerous autograph letters from the unfortunate Queen, (which I had the good luck of acquiring, and which I prize very highly,) are full of the most touching

and honorable evidences of this relationship.

The King always received me with great kindness whenever I came to Paris, and with the good-will to which he had accustomed me.

The day following my arrival, I was invited to the Tuileries for a special audience, in the apartments occupied by Charles X.

At the moment that the door of his salon was opened, the King approached me with especial eagerness, and his first words were:

"I am charmed to see you, Monsieur le Comte. Your King has at last become a King!"

Taken unawares, I sought for a moment to fathom the meaning of the King's remark, and soon found it in the Message to the States-General, on the 11th of December, 1829, in which King William declared that to him alone belonged the right to

interpret the Constitution, and that from January 1st, 1830, every officer serving in the employ of the Government must take his oath of adherence to this Royal declaration, under penalty of dismissal.

This was a sort of veritable *coup d'état*, all the more pleasing to King Charles X, as he was then contemplating a plan which was to have an entirely different issue, and of which no one as yet had any suspicion.

Charles X seemed to draw some kind of encouragement from this act of William I. I could not immediately understand why; and I sought to be enlightened by means of the reply that I had in mind, and that I made:

"The King of the Netherlands," I said, "will always know how to defend, with the firmness characteristic of his principles and his nature, all that appertains and belongs to the Royal prerogative. Your Majesty

can be sure of that. But at the same time, the King will never consent to have this authority separated from institutions which have become the Charters of the country which he has sworn to defend."

I had exactly found my mark.

At these last words of mine, the King took me quickly by the arm, and replied in these very words:—

"Understand this, Monsieur le Comte: there are two things which can no longer continue together. One of them will succumb. Royalty is menaced everywhere and on all sides. I am here, as you see, surrounded by enemies, and living on the edge of a volcano. This position cannot be maintained much longer. I must get out of it, and at all costs, do you understand? Royal power must recover its rights; must free itself from the fetters which shackle it.

This is the only guarantee of the return of social order."

I could hardly imagine that I had heard correctly; that the blindness of prejudice could go so far! I shivered from head to foot. . . . His words were a flash of light for me; I saw only too well what rashness and danger they contained; and of which I was soon to receive the proof.

Struck by the firmness and eagerness with which the King had just expressed himself, and by his determined and assured look, I remained for a moment silent and dumbfounded.

The King, noticing this, immediately continued:—

"Yes, what I have told you is true. What you call Charter and Constitution are not in accord with royal power, which is a thing by itself, and must remain so,

for the safety of society, which without it were condemned to perish.

"Royalty is being attacked everywhere, and on all sides; I have said this before and now I repeat it: we must free ourselves from this situation and free ourselves at any cost."

There could be no further doubt: the *coup d'état* had been planned in secret. And this secret had just escaped the lips of that unfortunate Prince, with whom it had become a fixed idea.

However, I still wished to try to lead the King's thoughts to other matters which he seemed to desire to disregard, and which bore incontestably the stamp of truth. These were the material prosperity of the country, the great progress of industry, and the consequent well-being apparent to everyone. I added my own observations to those of which I was merely the echo. I

said that in crossing through a large section of the Departments of the North, I had been struck with the general prosperity of the country, with the state of its cultivation; its coal mines; its industrial establishments in which a multitude of persons were engaged; with its beet sugar manufacturing yielding a large product, and quantities of fertilizer that, enriching and deepening the soil, added materially to the selling price and renting value of the land.

The King let me speak a long while without interruption; but finally, impatient with an argument which was displeasing to him, stopped me suddenly with these words:

"You deceive yourself; you are having illusions about the true state of affairs; you are seeing only the surface of things, while I am going to the bottom of them. It is the spirit of the country which is now being corrupted; the very foundation of

society which is being destroyed; its moral and religious principles are giving way. Power remains without prestige. Where are we heading? God knows! . . . I am here on a veritable volcano, as I have already told you, and I can not too often repeat: We must prevent the explosion, and I say it over and over again, at all cost we must extricate ourselves!"

The conversation continued a long time in this vein. Unequalled were my astonishment and consternation. We had been standing up all this time, the King very much excited, walking up and down the salon, speaking vehemently and with very animated gestures. At times he would come close to me, and then move away and stand motionless, leaning against the mantelpiece, attentive, surprised, not interrupting me, and only throwing in, from time to time, a few words of opposition, words

which were quite fair and necessary in keeping up the discussion that was becoming of powerful interest and of serious importance. Finally, the King signified that the audience was ended, and told me, as he left, that he would be charmed to see me again.

I immediately engaged a carriage and drove to the home of General Fagel, the Minister of the Netherlands. Great was his astonishment when he heard me relate in a few words what had taken place in that impressive interview from which I had just come. He urged me to see General Pozzo di Borgo, the soul of the foreign diplomatic corps at Paris, who was at that time the favorite correspondent of the Emperor Alexander. I had known General Pozzo di Borgo for a long time, and when he learned the nature of the matter I wished to discuss, he hastened to make an appointment for the following day at his home.

Emperor Alexander of Russia

XI

I HAD let him know that my main object was to recount to him all that had occurred in my interview the previous day at the Tuileries, and that, as I was about to leave for Brussels, I wished to have an understanding with him concerning the means of being of service to the King of the Netherlands, whom I was to meet there.

On the morrow, the Ambassador awaited me at the appointed hour, and gave instructions that no one should be admitted during the time that I might be with him.

"I shall tell you all I know," said the Count to me.

His face showed consternation and astonishment as I entered into all the details of my audience with the King, and especially

when I told him of the words of Charles X. And soon a sentiment of distress followed that of astonishment in his brilliant and penetrating mind, when I came to relate those words which betrayed the King's discouragement—the allusions to the dangers which were surrounding Charles X, and the necessity he found of extricating himself from the situation by one of those vigorous blows that are termed *coups d'état*.

"What!" cried Pozzo di Borgo. "Did the King say this to you? You heard these words fall from his lips. . . . But he has never said anything like it to anyone before! . . . Ah, yes! it is only too true that he is thinking of such a measure, since he regards it as indispensable to his safety. He will carry out this *coup d'état*, and, in so doing, he will destroy himself. He does not see one thing, this unfortunate King: he does not understand the general spirit of France.

He thinks it is royalist, while, in fact, it is left centre."

The Ambassador made use of this form of expression customary in the Chamber of Deputies, to distinguish the members belonging to the moderate liberal party, who wished a constitutional King,—a King and a Charter.

Recurring to the subject of my interview at the Tuileries, the Count Pozzo di Borgo kept on repeating:

"But how could the King have been so reckless as to speak to you of a *coup d'état* while he has denied such a thought to everyone, and to me, in particular, who have spoken of it to him many times, in making him cognizant of the dangers involved? And now he tells you without any beating around the bush! I am astounded, and cannot explain it. Ah well! Yes, the King will try this move and it will destroy

him. Be assured," Pozzo continued, "the Bourbons are doomed! I can tell you neither the day nor the hour, but rest assured, the Bourbons are doomed; and tell your King that it is I who predict this; and that I urge him to be greatly on his guard, and to try to rally round him all those whom he has displeased and alienated."

Count Pozzo di Borgo spoke truly when he said that the "left centre" represented the majority of public opinion in France; and, on this point, I replied to him by citing these significant words which I had heard from the lips of a man of great intelligence, a member of that party. He had said to me:

"The Bourbons believe they are menaced by us, and so hold us in suspicion; but they deceive themselves. We shall never attack them; we shall not even threaten them;

but they of their own accord will run themselves through on our swords."

"That's very true," said the Ambassador. "They are marching with lowered heads in the paths of a camarilla that surrounds them, and that will eventually destroy them."

The Ambassador then went into details in order to explain to me how complicated and dangerous the situation was becoming. Suddenly he stopped, and passed his hand over his brow. "Yes," he went on, "be assured that the Bourbons are lost; they will inevitably be overthrown. We are now, perhaps, on the very brink of their downfall. They are piling up error upon error."

"Speak to anyone here," the Ambassador continued; "and you will note in the diplomatic corps that it is not alone the Prussian Minister who perceives that something is

in the air. Speak with Baron von Werther before you leave; he will tell you, with other phrases, the same things that I have told you. And now, my dear Count, the best thing you can do is to go to warn your King, and enlighten him. There still is time. Speak to him also in my name; I authorize you to do so. Tell him you have found out things from me in which you concur; and, above all, advise him to satisfy, as soon as he can, the minds of his subjects, and to hold himself on his guard.

"He has long been following a dangerous road. He must now abandon it, and put a stop to the discontent which has arisen from his recent decrees."

Returning to my residence, I made some hasty memoranda. My only thought was to leave Paris and have my arrival coincide at Brussels with that of King William. I had, the previous night, seen Baron von

Werther, the Prussian Minister, whose words to me were almost identical with those of the Russian Ambassador.

It was about the 18th or 20th of March. I was to install in office the Commission of the Exposition, of which the King had made me President; to organize its work; and to pay the honors of this magnificent Exposition to the King, who was about to arrive at Brussels. My object, in accepting the honor of the presidency of this Commission, (composed as it was of eminent men distinguished in the world of commerce and industry,) had been to add to the significance of this undertaking, and to take advantage of the occasion of my official report to the King, to develop means of extending our commercial relations with foreign countries, especially Germany. In a word, I desired to open up for our industries and our products a market

which might include forty millions of people.

But it was too late.

This remarkable Exposition was to be the swan song of a growing prosperity and of a political state which, (whatever one may say,) could have been built on a firm foundation, despite the incompatibilities, more apparent than real, between the Belgians and the Dutch. All that would have been necessary was to have administrative separation between the Southern and Northern provinces, ministerial responsibility, and complete civil and religious liberty.

Indeed, to what destinies might not the Kingdom of the Netherlands have attained? For it united agricultural wealth to that of mineral resources, minerals of all different kinds; the advantages accruing from prosperous colonies; a considerable navy with a glorious past; and an army grown

to include three hundred thousand men, Belgians and Dutch, at the very time that the Conference of London was considering the means of establishing a neutral kingdom of Belgium, between France and Holland, the latter country to retain the name of the Kingdom of the Netherlands.

But we had not yet reached that point. The storm could still have been averted if King William, more wisely inspired, had adopted, forcefully and sincerely, the measures of interior administration which the situation called for.

I reached Brussels the night preceding the King's arrival from The Hague. At an early hour, on the following day, His Majesty received me in his Cabinet, and bade me be seated at a small table that stood between us. Thereupon, we at once took up the matter in hand. The King listened with close attention, and without

interruption, to the details which I gave him of my private audience with King Charles X, and of my conversations with the Russian Ambassador, Count Pozzo di Borgo, and Baron von Werther, the Prussian Minister (as well as to the impressions I myself had acquired). A moment of silence followed this long and important address. Then the King broke this silence with these very words:

"Well! I see we have done well here to yield to opinion on several points which seem to have troubled the minds of some, giving umbrage and even the opportunity to misconstrue my intentions. These concessions seem to have had a good result in appeasing men's minds; and it is only fair that I acknowledge that you have played a large part in this."

"Without doubt," I said, "the King has reason to congratulate himself on hav-

ing made certain concessions, urgently demanded by the most decided public opinion, particularly in the Southern provinces. . . . But, if Your Majesty will permit me to say it, it is not enough. . . ."

I had spoken with some warmth.

"Ah! I see where you are heading," said the King, looking at me sternly. "You wish me, do you not, to yield to the more or less imperiously voiced demand for the dismissal of Van Maanen, the Minister of Justice. But understand, Monsieur, that I will never yield to such imperious demands as these."

"And with reason, Sire. . . . But you can do better. Of your own accord, do what has not been asked of you, and what will doubtless prove to be of the most importance under these circumstances. Prove to the eyes of the most incredulous that you intend to change the system of your

Government. Change your ministry entirely, or, to express it better, change your Ministers; for where there is no ministerial responsibility and representative constitutional government, there is no real ministry. But by this step, and by selecting men who deserve public confidence, you will at least show that you really wish to adopt an entirely different path from that which you have followed, especially since 1825. . . .

"It is of the highest importance for you to spread throughout our land this idea of your new point of view, since you see that the most enlightened men in a great neighboring country, (such as the Ambassador Pozzo di Borgo,—to quote only one of the ablest statesmen,) are dismayed by the situation in France, and are disquieted by the thought of what may happen here, if Your Majesty does not endeavor to pacify the people, and to propitiate those whom

he has alienated. And after all, Sire, what are we really considering? The adoption of a measure which shall make an impression on opinion. Appoint men in whom there is general confidence, particularly in the Southern provinces. When you have produced the desired effect, which we recognize as necessary at this critical moment, you will then have time to consider, to reflect, to see what will happen in France, after this *coup d'état* which Charles X is planning, and respecting which, I have been privileged to enlighten you in the most minute fashion."

This clear and decisive statement seemed to have made some impression on the King, who was dumb with astonishment and could find no words with which to express himself in the presence of a man who had dared to say to him: Dismiss Van Maanen, your Minister of Justice; change all your Minis-

ters; seek, above all, to surround yourself with honorable men, enjoying general respect and wide popularity.

But were all the considerations, which achieve great results in times of calm, worth such long discussion on our part, in view of the serious events about to take place in France? Had not words of an entirely different import fallen from my lips at the beginning of our interview? Had not the King heard those words of Pozzo di Borgo? "The Bourbons are doomed; tell that for me to the King of the Netherlands. Let him be on his guard! Let him seek to appease his subjects; to draw around him again those whom he has alienated; to restore general confidence."

I returned to this point of departure, as the most important topic dominating the situation, particularly in Belgium on which events in France would first react.

The King, his head resting on his hand, had listened to me in silence for several moments, when, suddenly turning towards me, he said:

"Well, then! Let us see. Put the thing at its worst; what will happen? . . . Granted that Pozzo's prophecy will be realized; that the Bourbons will be overthrown, that the tri-colored flags and cockades will reappear, and that our Southern provinces will be invaded. . . . Well then! Monsieur, as to me, I shall retire beyond the rivers, and from The Hague I shall write as follows to all the sovereigns who signed the Treaty of 1815: You formed the Kingdom of the Netherlands. Only half of the Kingdom now remains. Ancient Belgium is invaded. Do you wish to re-establish it? I have no doubt you do. In that case, come to my aid. You are the guarantors of its existence,—the treaties exist."

While the King was thus expressing himself, I was thinking of the position he held with respect to the foreign Powers: with Austria, which he had displeased in the matter of financial settlements; with Prussia, in regard to the navigation of the Rhine; with England, in the question of customs duty; that England which was, doubtless, not looking with any indifference upon the great progress of our industries and manufacturers, at this very moment displayed in the halls of the Exposition.

I did not know just how to make the King understand that the consequences of such a situation would be of a kind to bring about various changes in the good-will of these foreign Cabinets towards him; and this was apart from the consideration that the policy of these sovereigns, intent on their own interests, and with different points of view, would lead them, for the

moment, to refrain from all political manifestations. This proved to be the case; and we saw the *coup d'état* in France, and the subsequent revolution, take place within three days; we saw the Courts of the Northern countries acting in unison, not only in giving recognition to what had been done, but also in urging the King of the Netherlands not to make any military demonstration that might disturb the Government newly established in France. Fear of giving France a pretext for arming and placing herself in a state of war went so far that the foreign Diplomatic Corps at The Hague was charged to make representations to the King in order to turn him from the thought of his reconquering the lost provinces through force of arms. But we are not as far as that yet.

In my reply to the King, I confined myself to saying:

"Pray consider, Sire, that treaties are made only by reason of the contemporary circumstances; that they are subject to modifications occasioned by new political conditions; that in time they are torn to pieces in the winds of revolutions; and that new acts, when fully accomplished, are the basis of new treaties. Is it not better to foresee events, while there is still time, and to try to avert the storm before it bursts upon you?"

"As for me, Sir," answered the King, in a dry and scornful tone, "I recognize only existing treaties as a basis for rightful action; I respect treaties when they involve the interests of others; I maintain they should be similarly respected when my interests are involved."

For the King to reason thus, was to lay aside all considerations resulting from the present situation, the deeds recently ac-

complished, the most simple forecasts, and to some extent to isolate himself somehow, in the midst of current ideas, from events which involved everyone around him in an unknown future.

XII

THE King was obviously deceiving himself as to the bases of agreement to be adopted by the Conference of London.

The first basis proposed and accepted at the Conference of London was the recognition of deeds already accomplished; and, indeed, the Southern provinces, which had just then revolted from Holland, were at once declared independent, and were permitted to constitute themselves as a separate State, and to convene a National Assembly, whence the Belgian Kingdom was to arise.

It was not yet the twentieth of March, 1830, but everything was arranged. The King, urged to return to The Hague, would doubtless have done better, (as circum-

stances have proved,) not to have stirred from Brussels. He advised me to occupy myself with the Exposition, of whose Commission His Majesty had nominated me as President to direct its work and to make a report of our proceedings.

The Commission was composed of very able men; including Mr. Biolley, from Verviers, Mr. John Cockerill, whose worth everyone appreciates, and other manufacturers, as well as the Presidents of the Chambers of Commerce of the various provinces.

I promised the King to give my whole attention to the undertaking. Several times I called the Commission together to establish a rule, which was soon drawn up and adopted; and every Member of the Commission assumed the task that he was to perform.

The place selected was the ancient Palace

of the Governors-General of the Austrian Netherlands. The Exposition was not to be opened to the public until the first of August.

The King said to me on leaving:

"This year I shall return to Brussels before the time of the opening of the States-General."

The day fixed by the Constitution for the opening of this important spectacle of the reunion of all the products of our national industry, was the third Monday of October.

During the interval, I returned to my estate near Liége where I remained until everything had been arranged in the Exposition halls.

XIII

THE King had left for The Hague with a tranquil mind, despite our conversation concerning public affairs, and the testimony of the keen and penetrating Count Pozzo di Borgo, of which I had availed myself in order the more strongly to impress the King; in spite, also of the Baron von Werther's opinion, which I had faithfully reported; and although he saw the approach in France of a crisis, in which the downfall of the Bourbon dynasty was predicted by experienced and far-sighted men, a prediction that the fatal consequences verified.

Nothing of all this appeared to have left any trace on the King's mind. Of no avail were the earnest entreaties to induce him to enter with conciliatory measures a

better path of government; and no doubt he considered my urgent solicitations as nothing but an exaggeration on my part, intended to obtain more from him than he wished to grant. During the short interval which elapsed between the departure of the King for The Hague and his return for the opening of the Exposition at Brussels, the overthrow of the Bourbon dynasty was silently preparing at Paris, and accomplished in three days.

We were awakened one morning, in the latter part of July, by the rumor of the Ordinances, signed by Charles X, on his return from a hunt in the Forest of Rambouillet. I had been at Brussels for a few days, presiding over the Commission of the Exposition. Astonishment and consternation were depicted on every face. The day following the signing of the Ordinances by Charles X, men took up arms in Paris,

and fighting went on in the streets, while, in his Palace, the King amused himself as usual, with whist, and continued to observe court etiquette, at S^{t} Cloud, in audiences to persons devoted to him, who hurried there to inform him of what was going on in the Paris streets. They sought to persuade him either to withdraw the fatal Ordinances, or to mount his horse and place himself at the head of his Guard, and have the streets swept before his eyes with cannon.

This was just exactly what the Duchess de Berry at Rambouillet sought on the third day to attempt. From the lips of the distinguished General Vincent, First Equerry of the Duchess, I heard the following touching and noble account:

The King had just arrived in the evening at the Château de Rambouillet. The Duchess de Berry took the General aside,

and asked if he contemplated returning to Paris the next morning. When the General answered in the affirmative, she said to him:

"Have you your carriage?"

"Yes, Madame."

"Well, in that case, I shall bring my riding habit; I shall take my son with me; and, arriving at Paris, I shall assemble the Guard, mount my horse, and with my son in my arms, I shall address the troop and place myself at its head. You will accompany me, General!"

"Ah! Madame, if you obtain permission from the King to carry out this noble and generous impulse, I shall be the most fortunate of men to have the honor of following you. But without that, Your Royal Highness knows that I am unable to take any action."

General Vincent was one of the generals of the Guard, who rendered glorious service.

All this took place on the 27th of July, at Rambouillet, whither the Court had withdrawn. The noble Duchess, with tears in her eyes, left, in saying:

"Adieu, General! Let us think no further of this. There is nothing left to be done. All is lost."

From the very beginning, sinister rumors were noised abroad at Brussels. However, people were more occupied with their thoughts of pleasure than with thoughts of the revolution; for the horse races were taking place at the course of Monplaisir. The Prince of Orange presided over them, and to his box came many persons, including strangers of distinction, English and French. Among others was the Duc d'Avaray, Captain of the Guard of Charles X, who had not been taken into the King's confidence with respect to his plans; and who, surprised by such audacity and courage

and resolution, in publishing the famous Ordinances, applauded heartily and walked away, remarking in a loud voice:

"We are saved! Here, at last, is a King who has resumed royal power, and re-entered upon his rights, and who will put an end to the revolution."

I entered the Prince's box, just as the Duc d'Avaray was excitedly uttering these words, which the Prince of Orange applauded with all his might, as if the King's action were a display of authority implying that the best possible measures had been adopted to insure success. Then, too, the Captain of the King's Guard did not leave the Prince of Orange any doubt on that score as he added:

"Rest assured, Monseigneur, that in case of any resistance, our cuirassiers will not even have to take their swords in hand; the heels of their boots will be

sufficient to disperse the riot in the streets."

This phrase recalled to my mind the language of the Emigrés at Coblentz, and probably led me slightly to shrug my shoulders. The Prince of Orange took notice of this with a glance in my direction, that I well understood. I was not surprised to hear him answer emphatically:

"Oh! I believe you, my dear Duke. I entirely agree with you. I have often said that all that is necessary is to know how to take things in hand in time, and spontaneously. The crop of the cavalier on many occasions suffices to disperse the mob."

I had withdrawn to a corner of the box to avoid taking part in the conversation; and assumed the appearance of being greatly interested in the races. But, on the contrary, my mind was strongly impressed by all that was happening at Paris, and by what

I had just heard. I recalled, at that moment a still renowned article in the *Journal des Débats*, that began with these words: "Unfortunate France! Unfortunate King!"

I recalled my last conversation at Paris with the Russian Ambassador, Pozzo di Borgo, just after I had left the audience which Charles X had granted me. And with a shudder I beheld the carelessness, the levity, the audacity involved in the fatal thoughts, (so soon and imprudently to be realized in a *coup d'état*,) which, a short time before, had absorbed all the attention of the unfortunate Charles X. To him the public reading of the abolition of the Charter seemed a quite simple and infallible affair and he expected immediately to see all heads bowed and all wills obedient. Ah! dizzy spirit of error! . . . You have existed in all times, in all places, in all the

epochs that history, (without throwing light upon you,) can trace!

Absorbed in these sad presentiments, my head was turned towards the race-course, as I watched the horses starting at the beginning of the track; but my thoughts were elsewhere. I was suddenly awakened from my reverie by the Prince of Orange, who had taken my hand, and was shaking it with that cordiality to which his kindness had long accustomed me; and his first words were:

"Well! have you heard the great news?"

My reply was quite simple. It could not resemble the answer made by the Captain of the Guard of Charles X. The seriousness of my look indicated sufficiently to the Prince, without a word on my part, how disturbed I was, not only at the situation in France, but at the grave consequences that were to result for us, knowing as I did

the indecisive character of King William and the lack of prudence with which his son, the Prince of Orange, so frequently acted.

The Prince of Orange, through his chivalry, his conduct in the English army at the time of the war with Spain, his dashing bravery at Waterloo, his kindly spirit, his general nobility of character, had won the hearts of the Belgians. But for some time past he had fallen into some disfavor at Brussels, by reason of the persons with whom he associated in private life, and through slander which was noised abroad concerning him. He now was met by coldness where, formerly, he had been accustomed to receive the warmest of welcomes; and on that very day of the races things had reached such a pass that if the winning horse came from the Prince's stables, it was received with hisses instead of applause.

XIV

ALL these things, unimportant in themselves, appeared as bad omens at a time when there was about to break forth in the streets of Paris, a great revolution, whose consequences would necessarily soon be felt in our own country.

The Bourbons were hurled from their throne, as had been foreseen by the celebrated diplomat whose words I had but lately reported to the King.

Louis Philippe d'Orleans had assumed the reins of government, and not in the capacity of Regent; for he had been forced to accept the sovereignty, acclaimed by the National Guard and recognized by the Chambers. He had accepted the Crown, in order to avoid a Republic.

Europe seemed to be forcing this action, for all the diplomats accredited to France, instead of having followed Charles X to Rambouillet, had, on the contrary, received orders from their Courts to remain at Paris.

This was the moment that should have been seized upon by King William, who not only was among the first to recognize with great cordiality Louis Philippe as King of France, but who also forbade asylum to the unfortunate Duchess de Berry, should she attempt to find a refuge in his domain.

The policy of the King of the Netherlands seemed clearly indicated: Through General Robert Fagel, his Minister Plenipotentiary who remained at Paris, he must have learned that the policy of Prince Talleyrand—who had become Minister of Foreign Affairs—was based on an English al-

Louis Philippe, King of the French

liance, on the intention of reassuring Europe regarding the maintenance of the treaty of 1815, and on peace; and this policy had been adopted by King Louis Philippe. From this point of view, if King William had been a sagacious politician, he would have taken the lead, and have sent to Paris a representative vested with full power immediately to open (in conjunction with General Fagel, who had been accredited Minister to the new King of France,) negotiations tending to offer the Netherlands an alliance with that already agreed upon between England and France, and such an offer would doubtless have been all the more willingly accepted, in that it implied a renewed consecration, on the part of France, of the Treaty of 1815, an act that would have been reassuring to all Europe, for Europe would with pleasure have therein recognized the maintenance of the line of

fortifications.[1] And Louis Philippe would not have failed to accept the offer, as his acceptance would be a pledge to Europe of his disinterestedness and his desire to preserve peace.

If, after that, King William had modified his institutions in the Netherlands, and had proclaimed a Constitutional Government with direct elections and ministerial responsibility, the weapons would have immediately dropped from the hands of the opposition at Brussels; and, granting the possibility that the Government of Louis Philippe would not be able to maintain itself, and would be overturned by either a republican or legitimist revolution, it must be admitted that the Powers of the North would have been grateful to King William for having preserved the Kingdom of the Netherlands.

[1] Against France.

The Prince of Orange, who had prolonged his stay at Brussels, hastened back to The Hague, where he found the King in ignorance of many happenings, and, above all, in a state of habitual indecision as to what part to take, although he had been the first to recognize the new King of France.

XV

If the special sense for political strategy, of which we have just spoken, was absent from the line of conduct that the King wished to adopt under these grave conditions, he should, at least, have devoted himself to means of calming party irritation in his country, by cutting away all internal difficulties through a frank declaration of his willingness to follow a new path of government. But he did nothing, absolutely nothing. Three months passed in this same indecision, this same inactivity. He allowed hopes of concession to arise, but nothing came of them. Then, finally, he made up his mind, but only when it was too late.

Nevertheless, a very simple consideration

should have occurred to him. The Kingdom of the Netherlands, in not having entered into the alliance with France and England, found itself, through this abstention, in the same attitude of hostility to France as had been involved in the Treaty of 1815, signed at Vienna. The Government of Louis Philippe thus had a great interest in seeking means of severing, should the opportunity offer, that portion of the Kingdom which, formerly part of France prior to the reverses of 1814, had since then been annexed to Holland. On this theory, the French Government could play an advantageous game in fomenting, or in merely supporting, the spirit of opposition and discontent which was on the increase in the Southern provinces, (ancient Belgium,) with the purpose of seizing the occasion, that would sooner or later present itself, of achieving the separation of these pro-

vinces from Holland; not, indeed, in order to annex them again to France, (an act which to the Great Powers would have been opposed,) but, rather, should circumstances permit, with a view to the possibility of the establishment of these provinces as a consummation that France would regard as a peaceful conquest.

Further on I shall relate how, on a day several years later, I was, by chance, enabled to hear from the lips of the principal actor in the revolutionary movement at Brussels, in 1830, "how the first day was nothing more than a simple riot, which had no other result than the destruction by fire of the offices of the Minister of Justice, an uprising which would have fallen to the ground, through lack of support, lack of direction and aim; but," he added, "fortunately I had the word of command. . . ."

The King, as I have said, had appointed

me President of the Commission of the Exposition, which was about to open, of the Products of National Industry, and had put me in charge of directing its affairs.

The political horizon was clouding up from day to day. The secret societies were never inactive, and were preparing the way for an outburst which, in fact, took us by surprise, for no precautions had been taken, no preparations planned.

The moment had come when the King was to return from The Hague to Brussels, for that great national occasion—the opening of the Exposition. This was in the first days of August, 1830. The presence of the King at Brussels had, (despite the disturbance caused by the Ordinances of Charles X and the subsequent downfall of the Bourbons,) restored not calm, but at least the appearance of tranquillity in the

streets, where everyone was busy with his own affairs.

The correspondence between Louis Philippe and William I was full of courtesy and amenities. The King, who had come to Brussels to be present at the Exposition, could easily have made this a pretext for taking up his residence there, before the usual season, which was the beginning of October.

I made every effort imaginable to induce him so to do, but in vain. His ever methodical spirit interfered. The difference would have been hardly noticeable; it was a question merely of six weeks. No matter: it did not fall in with his usual, strictly-observed programme. On the day of his second visit to the Exposition, in which he showed his pride, especially when strangers were present, he planned to leave for The Hague in the evening. I had urged him

to show his satisfaction with the Members of the Commission by inviting them to dinner; I had hoped thereby to gain an extra day of his presence at Brussels. But not at all. The King said to me:

"I willingly accept your suggestion, but for this very day. I shall depart immediately thereafter."

The dinner did indeed take place, and was very gay, and animated by the enthusiastic and friendly conversation which His Majesty kept up with his guests; and it must be admitted that to the impetus given by King William to manufactures and industry, was due in large part the spirit of enthusiasm and encouragement, to which His Majesty contributed, and which the Exposition made evident to the citizens, and to the many foreigners who came to visit it.

The after-dinner talk which the King was

always glad to prolong, extended, on this occasion, beyond the usual limits. Before dismissing us, His Majesty, seeing me standing alone, and leaning against the chimney mantlepiece, (in an attitude of thought that contrasted somewhat with the expression of satisfaction of the other guests gathered in the salon,) came up to me and said:

"How now! I find you here alone, apart from the rest, on a day when you, more than any other person, should show satisfaction. But, on the contrary, your sad and preoccupied air contrasts strongly with that of everyone else."

It was then that there took place between the King and myself the conversation which can be found published in the volume by Mons. De Grovenstein, and which was continued to the moment of His Majesty's departure for The Hague.

"Yes, Sire," I answered, "I frankly confess that I am much troubled by the situation in which you are leaving us, and I infinitely regret your departure at such a moment as this."

"But why? What is there that is so serious?"

"There is nothing, just at this moment, I agree; but is that any reason why, in the actual circumstances, there remains nothing to be feared, in the King's absence? France is emerging from a violent outburst, at which everyone is excited, while opinions are divided. We cannot disregard the fact that there are in our midst tendencies and plots in the making, which, at any moment may be translated into disturbances. . . . And who, Sire, have you here, to confront such an eventuality? The Military Governor is a worthy old man who has frequently asked you to allow

him to resign. Our good old General Constant, handicapped by age and infirmities, has a great deal of difficulty in mounting his horse. . . . As Civil Governor of the Province you have also a very worthy man, but one who, at this moment, does not appear to me to be equal to his position. The police force is badly organized; and then, besides, I do not know how much longer these different authorities can get on together in perfect accord.

"With you here, Sire, everything is different. Orders are immediately given; your very presence is imposing; why not take up your residence here at once? The Exposition affords you the pretext. . . . I urge you, Sire. Put off your departure; it is the wisest, the safest move. Think of the seriousness of the situation."

"But, Monsieur," answered the King, "you know that in six weeks I shall be

established at Brussels for the opening session of the States-General. I do not deny that what you say is true in regard to the lack of goodwill existing between the civil and military authorities. But remember this, also, that, should need arise, it takes me but from twelve to fourteen hours to come from The Hague to Brussels. Besides which, we must hope," His Majesty ended by saying, "we must hope that all will go well during this short interval."

Cast down by this remark, I bowed my head in taking leave of the King, and said:

"I shall hope with you, Sire."

Whereupon he added:

"You know, of course, that the marriage of my daughter, Princess Marianne, is to take place at The Hague. I trust you will not fail to be present."

I did, in fact, attend the wedding; but the King was never again to see Brussels.

It was with a sad and vague presentiment that I saw him depart; and on that very evening, I got a post-chaise to take me to Argenteau, where I had left my wife and children; and there I remained until the 21st of August, the day fixed upon for the closing of the Exposition, and for the signing of the official reports.

The time passed without any event to disturb my tranquillity, and without the King taking any steps to quiet the troubled state of affairs, even as much as to grant some of the concessions, that had been asked for, and, that had been, after a fashion, I shall not say, promised, but which, at least, were concessions that the King had allowed the people to look upon as hopeful of being granted.

XVI

When the time arrived, I made my plans for returning to Brussels; and in the evening of the 22d of August, I was re-established in my residence, in the rue Ducale. On arriving there, I asked for an opera programme, counting on going if they were to give *La Muette*, whose music I like. This was, as a matter of fact, to be performed, but my porter made a mistake and sent me the programme for the previous evening instead of for that day. I seized the opportunity to remain at home and to retire at an early hour. I was awakened in the night by an unwonted stir in the house, and rang for my valet to ascertain the cause. He had not yet gone to bed, and he came into my room to tell me what had taken

place that evening after the opera; that the house of the Minister of Justice had been destroyed by fire and that there was fighting going on in the streets. Hastily I dressed myself; and went at once to the King's Palace, where I saw a company of grenadiers drawn up in formation, carrying arms which they had been instructed not to use.

During that night, there were several men in smocks killed by the National Guard. The 23^{d} of August passed without any other event. People did not just know what it was they wanted, or why fighting was going on; and all this in the midst of unsurpressed disturbance. Since the preceding night's fire, after the opera, no measure of prevention or suppression had been taken. Some of the weapons of the National Guard had fallen into the hands of the insurgents. The next morning, it

is true, these arms were retaken by the National Guard, but only to be recaptured a little later by the insurgents.

The following day, the 24th of August, was the anniversary day of the Fête of the King. For this celebration, preparations had been made to illuminate the façades of the ministerial residences in the park. But in an instant all these illuminations were broken, stripped off, and destroyed. Hitherto the insignia of Royalty had not been attacked; but in the evening of this 24th of August, the royal arms were removed and trampled under foot. We were in the thick of a revolution.

One of the King's Ministers, Mr Van Gobbelschroy—the Minister of the Interior —was still at Brussels, where he had been detained by reason of the Exposition. This Minister had not deemed it fitting to inform the King of events at Brussels

other than by a letter, sent by post—a letter which took three days to reach the King, who was staying at the Château de Loo!

Uncertain as to what might be happening at Liége and in the neighborhood of Argenteau, (and fearing that the insurrection had extended to the laboring population of these cantons,) I sent, on the night of the 24th, for post horses, and set forth in all haste to join my family.

As I was passing through Liége, I learned that there had been some stir in that town, and that a Committee of public safety had been organized by Mynheer Sandberg, the Governor. Dutch by descent, he was a man of level head and of resolution; a wise man, clear-visioned and endowed with excellent judgment. Feeling that his authority had already been crippled by the events at Brussels, he had lost no time in writing

me. I had approved this prudent measure, and we had agreed to continue our correspondence.

Mynheer Sandberg was one of those few who saw that the Government, in its heedlessness, was heading towards destruction. This administrator had, for some time, tried to enlighten the King in regard to his personal danger, as well as that which threatened the country. His uprightness and his frankness only served to cause his fall into disfavor, upon his return to The Hague.

The King, who for a long time had refused to recognize the evidence of dangers which, following the Revolution of July, at Paris, were arising at his very feet; and who did not wish to hear of the precautions that loyal adherents besought him to adopt in order to quiet the country and to make the necessary concessions while there was

yet time, had been informed, as I have said, at the Château de Loo, by a letter from his Minister of the Interior, still at Brussels, of the revolutionary movement which had broken out in that city. It really seemed that, so as to withdraw himself still more, he had shut himself up in an isolated château, far from The Hague, without even taking the precaution to arrange means of being promptly warned by couriers. It seemed, I maintain, as if he had left Brussels with a tranquil mind and confident that the dangers which might result from his absence, as well as the report of the effect produced at Paris by the publication of the Ordinances of Charles X, had been exaggerated. He seemed, moreover, to feel confident that all that was needed to bring Brussels to reason and re-establish his authority there, were the troops re-

united around Antwerp under the command of Prince Frederic. But the outcome was soon to teach the King the insufficiency of his attitude.

XVII

THE time was at hand for the opening of the States-General, about to assemble at The Hague on the third Monday in October. For a little while hopes were founded on this session, and the Representatives of the Southern provinces gathered together there with marked ceremony, particularly those Deputies belonging to the Opposition, in order to give to the King proof of their devotion to the reigning dynasty.

This was also the period fixed upon for the celebration of the Princess Marianne's marriage to Prince Albert of Prussia. The day the King left Brussels I had promised him to be present at the wedding, and I wished to keep my word, despite the subsequent events. Provided with an English

passport, (so as not to have to apply to those who had come into power since the Revolution,) I remained only a few hours at Brussels.

My arrival became known. Where I was going was also known; and during the three hours I spent at Brussels, several persons of note, who had on the impulse of the moment taken part in the revolutionary movement, came to me to express their disgust and aversion regarding what had happened; still others wrote me they did not doubt that the King's authority would soon be re-established at Brussels, and I was asked, in speaking to the King, to plead the necessity which had led to the circumstances in which some of them found themselves, and which had led them further than they desired to go.

I was promised frank co-operation in favor of the restoration, under guaranty of

certain concessions,—the King's pledge of great moderation, his willingness to forget what had happened, his pardon for wrongs committed. But, above all, I was told:

"Obtain the certainty of the safety of our persons and of our property. As to the rest," they added, "we know you, and we grant you full freedom for any steps you may wish to take, and we promise that whatever you shall have done or agreed to in our name at The Hague, will be ratified by us."

Several hours later, as day was breaking, I got into my post-chaise, and drove to The Hague, clothed, as it has been seen, with full power by some of those who had become more involved than they wished in the terrible catastrophe which had distracted the country and put everything at hazard.

The month that followed the events of the

22nd, 23rd and 24th of August gave much food for thought. No one knew how things would end. Some wished a Republic; others, reunion with France; while many desired only the re-establishment of King William I, but with a representative Government, ministerial responsibility, suitable guarantee and concessions, and perhaps, also, the administrative separation of the two large divisions of the Kingdom.

The authority of the King, thus restored, would have had a great chance of success.

The overthrow of authority had to a large extent brought its own retribution; people had grown tired of living from day to day; they had no confidence in the provisional arrangements of the moment, and much doubt as to the future; they feared being attacked at any instant by the troops commanded by Prince Frederic, stationed between Antwerp and Brussels.

The streets of Brussels remained barricaded; one of the barricades had to be raised, to let my post-chaise pass. On the following day of my journey to The Hague, I arrived at the home of Baron Henri Fagel, formerly Ambassador at London, who had kindly invited me to lodge at his house. Baron Henri Fagel was one of those men whom one seldom meets—a man of wide experience, just, intelligent, calm in his judgment, and very devoted, by reason of long service, to the House of Orange-Nassau, without ignoring the King's faults, which he deplored as much as I.

During the entire time of my visit at The Hague, I was happy in the midst of his excellent family; I had for a long time been intimately associated with his brother, the Lieutenant-General, Aide-de-Camp of the King, and his Minister Plenipotentiary at Paris. A third brother, likewise a

man of great merit, was a Councillor of State.

The King, as soon as he saw me, came toward me eagerly:

"I am longing to have a talk with you," he said to me. "I thank you for having come; but, unfortunately, I have not an hour that I can give you to-day."

"To-morrow is the opening of the States-General; and the day after is the marriage of Princess Marianne. I shall ask you to come to my study at the very earliest moment possible. I must have full leisure for a long talk with you."

Three days passed without my being able to see His Majesty except in his salon and at dinner.

I was present at the marriage of the Princess Marianne, which took place in the evening at the Palace. Sadness was marked on every countenance; the ad-

dress by the King's chaplain was full of allusions to current events. The King, his head lowered, was frequently obliged to place his hat before his eyes so as to conceal the tears which fell from them. Was this due to a presentiment that this ill-mated union was soon to produce sad results and bring trouble to his old age?

Alas! that evening, which I shall never forget, was the saddest imaginable!

XVIII

A PROVISIONAL Government had just been set up at Brussels. Each day brought new adherents; and yet there was a general feeling of unrest; people lived in suspense, not knowing what was going to happen to them.

Thinking men, who had allied themselves to the movement only in order to obtain from the King such concessions as were reasonable, just, and rendered necessary by the circumstances, but who had never intended carrying their objections, their complaints, their demands for redress of wrongs to the point of a revolution aimed at wresting the Royal power from the House of Orange-Nassau—these men were commencing to be anxious concerning the out-

come of those events which had, in their opinion, changed the real issue; and they showed themselves very strongly disposed to seize the first opportunity to support such concessions as might have been obtained from a better advised sovereign.

On the day after the wedding, the Members of the States-General came to offer their homage and congratulations to the newly-married couple. Everyone was there. The diplomats representing the opposition advanced by the Southern provinces were in full attendance, and counted on being much noticed in the court salons.

Among the various groups, there could be heard, spoken in lowered tones, the words "administrative separation between the Northern and Southern provinces," the speakers suggesting that, under the same sceptre, of course, this would be a means of pacifying the country and of

assuring a happy future. It seemed to these people as though this was really the most efficacious means of overcoming every difficulty and of quieting men's minds; they had no doubt that this would answer every purpose and would save the Kingdom of the Netherlands and the dynasty.

Others went still further in their ideas: they saw in the revolutionary movement which had taken place in the Southern provinces, merely the rising in arms of Brussels, which they called the rebel city,—an uprising that should be quelled by force. To listen to them, all this was easy to do. The majority of these people did not believe that a real revolution was in progress. They appeared convinced that everything was going to arrange itself.

However, the Conference of London had already assembled to take up the question,

and to deliberate on the destiny of the two divided countries.

The King took advice upon advice, without coming to any decision. Finally, His Majesty, with whom I had the honor to dine almost every day, approached me, and said in a low voice:

"I shall expect you to-morrow morning, at seven o'clock, in my study."

"Sire, I shall be punctual in presenting myself for your orders. It is high time; for I am on the point of departing; I have left my family at Argenteau where they are not particularly safe at this moment, a short distance from Verviers, the centre of a populous class of factory workmen, many of whom are now out of work. I shall remain here, if I can be of any service to Your Majesty; otherwise, I shall hasten to join my family."

"Well, then, to-morrow!" replied the King.

For several days I had prepared myself for this conversation, in which I had fully decided to go to the bottom of things, to express myself clearly, frankly, and without any reticence; and all the more so, because, since my arrival at The Hague, I had received news of the utmost gravity, which I thought important to communicate to His Majesty. On the next day, therefore, I presented myself at the King's palace, at the appointed hour.

XIX

I FOUND His Majesty in his study. As soon as I entered, the King asked me to be seated, and to tell him what I thought of the events which had recently taken place at Brussels. He added:

"I have confidence in you, and wish to act in accordance with what you shall tell me."

"Sire, I left Brussels the morning of the very same day on which Your Majesty departed. I returned there to sign the official reports of the Commission of the Exposition, the very day that the initial rioting after the opera was followed by the burning of the Minister of Justice's residence. Soon after that, I returned to my own estates, whence I have just come, after having made

Facsimile of a portion of Napoleon's own Map of the Netherlands, used by him during "The Hundred Days"

a few hours' stay at Brussels.—But Your Majesty must be thoroughly informed of what has gone on there. The Governor still fulfills his administrative functions; he must have found means of keeping you informed both as to men and affairs. If you will kindly tell me of his last reports to you, I can the more easily tell you what I think and state the reasons for my opinions."

"I!" exclaimed the King. "*I* receive reports from Brussels! I have no one there who reports anything to me."

"And did Your Majesty send no one there to be on the spot and give you information? . . . But I ask your pardon. It is unbelievable that the King has hitherto remained in entire ignorance of all the happenings at Brussels."

"It is true," answered the King, "that

the Government which calls itself 'provisional,' has left the Governor at his post; but of what use can he be to me."

"Well, then, send someone who can inform you of the true state of affairs!"

"I know of no one here who would wish to be charged with such a mission," the King replied.

During the day, I met a man of high rank at Brussels, whom I knew to be well qualified for undertaking such a mission with zeal and intelligence. He accepted the proposition which I made to him in this matter, and I had him visit one of the King's secretaries where it was decided that he should go to Brussels, there to make reports to Prince Frederic, who would transmit them to the King.

All this went on very slowly, and resulted in information regarding events at Brussels only.

But now I must no longer interrupt my narrative.

Thus, not only did the King know nothing of the happenings at Brussels, but Prince Frederic himself—Commander-in-Chief of the army corps of thirty thousand men drawn up in front of Antwerp, did not even have—or so it appeared—any information of these happenings,—which seems absolutely incomprehensible!

The King, as I have already said, did not wish to employ the word "revolution" to characterize events at Brussels, and elsewhere in the Southern Provinces. He maintained that Brussels alone was in a state of rebellion; while there might indeed have been some troubles at Liége, attributable to the weakness of Governor Sandberg; but that Flanders, Haiman, Namur and a part of Limbourg had never been under the wing of his authority.

All these reservations resulted solely from the King's utter ignorance of the state of affairs, and of men's minds. They would have been entirely admissible between persons dispassionately discussing events, especially events belonging to long past history. But for those who had to examine accomplished facts, and burning questions of the present, this was a sad way of losing time, and precious time at that. The King was, moreover, entirely mistaken in imputing to weakness the wise course that Mynheer Sandberg had followed at Liége.

I cut short useless and aimless repetitions in saying to the King that His Majesty had been ill-informed; that the insignia of Royalty had disappeared not only at Brussels but in all the Southern Provinces; that at Liége, if the Governor was to be blamed for having appointed a Commission of Public Safety, composed of the most honor-

able citizens, in order to prevent the danger —in a country manufacturing arms—of having the store-houses fall into the hands of the laborers—I also was to be blamed as much as he, for I was equally involved in every act passed by this Governor during those latter days. Then I added:—The King must have no illusions concerning the result of these events in the Southern Provinces; the revolution was going forward there at great strides, and if he had any means to stop it or only of lessening it, he had better employ them. It is high time that the Royal authority should be exercised with prudence and firmness; otherwise God knows whither we are tending.

"Well, then, what is there to do?" said the King, who, without interruption, had listened to me in silence. "Come! What course do you think should be adopted?"

I did not hesitate in answering this question; I was prepared for it.

"Sire, this is no longer a time for temporizing. An important step must be taken. There must be an administrative separation between the two great parts of the Kingdom, in conformity with the legislative Chambers which compose the States-General, and we must put the question to them frankly."

"First of all, in answer to this," said the King, "I will tell you that the question has, at this very moment, already been submitted to the Legislature."

"I am not unaware of that, Sire. But I shall take the liberty of calling Your Majesty's attention to the fact that everything depends on the manner of submitting the question. Everyone is convinced that, in putting the question, as you have done, without stating your motive, without re-

vealing your true thought concerning the importance of the end to be attained, you are opening a free field for the interpretation of your thoughts, and one which people will not fail to make the most of in a contrary sense. By this I mean that the public will consider your action as an attempt, in a general way, towards pacifying the uprisings in the provinces; but that, at bottom, you will be best satisfied if the proposition is rejected.

"If, on the other hand, you are convinced, as am I and many others, that the adoption of this plan is the part of wisdom, and will best contribute to the peace and quiet of our country, then the question should be submitted in another form. You should say that, *convinced of the necessity of bringing about a great change in the Administration*, you have many reasons for believing that the administrative separation of the North-

ern and Southern Provinces should be determined upon; and that you therefore submit the solution of the problem to the decision of the States-General. Unless I am greatly mistaken, the majority of the Assembly will express themselves in favor of administrative separation under the same sceptre, and a great step will be achieved towards the re-establishment of order, and the pacification of men's minds throughout the country. Should any trouble or inconvenience result, any embarrassment from this division, either by reason of material interests, or otherwise—why, then the only consequence would be a return to the governmental fusion, and such fusion, thus asked for by both sides simultaneously, would, in the future, become all the more solid and more firmly established.

"The first point obtained, there remains a second no less important. It is that you

yourself, Sire, should issue from this atmosphere of irritation in which you here are living, and that you should dwell nearer the places where the uprisings are. You might, for instance, go to Antwerp, where you would be perfectly safe by reason of the strategic position of the city, its citadel, its harbor, and your army which is assembled in the neighborhood. Thither, you might be preceded by a proclamation announcing that, having come to review your army, and finding yourself so near to Brussels, you desire to seize the occasion to address some words of peace and conciliation to the inhabitants; that you are even willing to receive a deputation composed of important citizens commissioned to express to you the national hopes and desires, and that you will grant just and reasonable requests in reference to what they consider the grievances against the Government.

But the King must, at the same time, choose a man in whose principles, character, and position he can sufficiently trust, and charge him with a secret mission to the most influential citizens involved in the revolutionary movement,—men who at heart, anxious concerning the hidden future, shall willingly seize as a plank of safety, this opportunity for reconciliation."

XX

THE King had listened to me without interruption, and with great attention; I had reached even further than I had thought into his troubled mind. Seizing this moment to go still further in moving him, I said:

"Last night, when I was thinking deeply concerning the weighty matters that we were going to discuss at the interview which you were so kind as to fix for this morning, I took my pen, and, lighting my lamp, rapidly drafted a plan of proclamation, to be signed by Your Majesty and published upon your arrival at Antwerp. But since my conversation with you, I see it is of no use."

"But not at all, you are quite wrong,"

the King answered quickly. "Show it to me."

"Sire, you must excuse me, as it is hardly legible. However, if Your Majesty desires it, I shall read it to you; and what encourages me, I admit, is that I wished to have the opinion of the three Fagel brothers concerning it, and they all approved, and strongly urged me to bring it to your attention. Thus it is in a spirit of obedience far more than from personal vanity that I now venture to read it to you, with Your Majesty's permission.—This, then, is the

"PROCLAMATION.

"I have come to Antwerp; and at the same time that I am reviewing my troops assembled under the walls of this city, I wish to have you, citizens of Brussels and of the Southern Provinces, hear some words of peace and conciliation.

"I have just submitted to the Assembly of the States-General the question of the separation, as far as the administration is concerned, of the two great divisions of the Kingdom, a proposition which I believe is in the general interest.

"I am ready to listen to the wishes of intelligent men, even those who were involved in the uprising at Brussels, a movement which perhaps was to some extent instigated from abroad.

"I thank the National Guard for the services it has rendered in these circumstances.

"Now that quiet has been restored, I wish the National Guard to work together with the troops of the line who will to-morrow resume their usual service in Brussels.

"No one need be disturbed by the opinions he has voiced, or by his conduct during this time of trouble. Force will be used only against factious resistance and against

those vagrants who thrive on disorder and who breed insurrection.

"Decreed in my Palace at Antwerp, the

. . . . .

"WILLIAM Ist,

"*King of the Netherlands.*"

After I had finished my plan for the proclamation, the King, who had listened attentively, said to me:

"I have no objection to make as regards your expression of sentiments of conciliation and generosity, which I really feel; but I consider that you have committed me too far in the matter of the separate administration, and the changes which must result from such a step."

"Will you not, Sire, believe that things have now come to a pass where your words must be accompanied by a pledge of certainty that shall leave no room for doubt

as to your intentions? The time is pressing; you must endeavor to make some impression on the minds of your citizens, and convince them that you wish to adopt an entirely new course and that you will boldly approach the question of those necessary reforms, whose establishment has become indispensable."

"Well, let us consider," said the King. "Who is there to send to Brussels to become fully informed of what has happened, and upon what we may count? Truly, I know of no one who can properly fulfill this mission."

"You have no one, you say, Sire. Well, in that case, I offer myself—I place myself at your disposal. — Will Your Majesty appear in person to-morrow morning at Antwerp, there to sign and forward to Brussels the proclamation which I have just read to you? I shall leave to-night; and twenty-four hours after your arrival,

I guarantee to bring to you some of the most influential men of the revolutionary party who, anxious over the future of the country, will ask for nothing more at present than the re-establishment of your authority, under certain conditions which can be discussed in your presence, and which, I feel assured, will end by being accepted.

"You have thirty thousand men between Antwerp and Brussels. A King, who, in the midst of his army, grants, in response to the desire of the nation, concessions demanded almost universally, is not speaking a language which can be imputed to weakness. It is not tainted by fear; it does not imply a forced surrender. If the King yields under such circumstances, it is a recognition of an opportunity and of justice, and because he wishes to grant concessions freely consented to by him as a benefaction to the nation.

"We all know that the National Guard has been factious, in permitting itself to be influenced by the revolutionary party. It has shown itself weak in principle, and powerless to check disorder. But you, Sire, should see only the service rendered under these difficult circumstances. Your troops should re-enter Brussels preceded by the National Guard; and if there is any resistance, instigated perhaps not without foreign support, the Guard shall encounter the fire. Your troops will then have the opportunity to avenge the insult given the flag, on that fatal day of the insurrection."

I had made a strong impression upon the King by the force and ardor of my remarks, no less than by the justice of the reflections which I submitted to his judgment; but he soon found a subterfuge in pleading that his departure from The Hague thus unforeseen, and to some extent secre-

tive, would be misinterpreted in the Northern Provinces. To strengthen his argument, he advanced a reason that I was not able to contradict. He told me that he had news from Amsterdam, informing him of the disturbed state of mind of its citizens, and His Majesty sought to make me understand that he did not well know how he stood in the Northern Provinces. However, I had a reply ready for him, and said, that in any case, the forty-eight hours' absence that I asked of him would not leave sufficient time for an attempt at insurrection, an act which would not be at all characteristic of the nation. The King's objection was reduced to its true worth. But he soon found another: it was now in regard to me that His Majesty evinced anxiety. On thanking me for my offer to go to Brussels, he added:

"You are not thinking of the personal

danger that you will encounter. You may be risking your life there. Brussels is full of strangers, of emissaries, it may be, from a neighboring country. These men, who have participated in the uprising in our Southern Provinces, will not fail to seek an opportunity of getting rid of you."

"As far as my life is concerned, Sire, that is my own affair; and you may believe that I understand how to take steps to avoid falling into any trap."

I had made another condition in connection with my offer to go to Brussels. Knowing the King's suspicious nature I expressed the wish to be accompanied by a man of his choice, who would act as a witness to my words and deeds. The friendship and personal esteem which the Prince of Orange had for a long time shown me, made it, in a way, obligatory, in circumstances so

decisive, for me to proffer this request. Thus a new embarrassment, a new perplexity, arose.

"But why that?" said the King, with an air of astonishment.

My reply was quite simple.

"In so serious and so delicate a situation, one which may bring forth new and unforeseen incidents, of a nature impossible to define or to predict, it is important that I should be accompanied by a person with whom I can plan; and then, too, it is natural that I should think of how best to render my position immune from all false steps or interpretations."

The King was touched, recognizing my proceedings as a proof of the attachment, the devotion which I felt for him. The interview, which had been prolonged beyond all measure, he then ended, in saying to me:

"I will reflect on all these matters"; and he thanked me cordially for the frankness with which I had spoken, and asked me to leave with him the plan of proclamation which I had read to him. It was to no purpose that I apologized for the hasty manner in which it had been drawn up, for the scrap of paper that I had used, for he took the document from my hand and said: "I wish to keep it."

The King, however, called my attention to the fact that it devolved upon Prince Frederic, Commander-in-Chief of the army, to issue the proclamation of which His Royal Highness was already in possession, and whose wording had been deliberated upon and decreed at the Council of Ministers. I replied that I hoped it had been couched in conciliatory terms, but that, in any case, a proclamation invested with the authority of the King's signature must have an al-

together different import and effect, and would in consequence echo more resoundingly and inspire more confidence throughout the country.

XXI

We now know that the proclamation evolved and decreed in the Council was, on the contrary, so worded as to result rather in arousing armed hostility among men previously not engaged in rebellion, than in causing the weapons to fall from the hands of others.

I ended by urging the King not to direct any of the Princes, his sons, to conduct the attack against Brussels, in case he might wish to employ force there. To this, the King replied:

"As to the Prince of Orange, no, I agree with you there. But as to Prince Frederic, that is a different matter: he must maintain his position as Commander-in-Chief

of the army, composed both of Belgians and of Dutch."

And, in fact, there had already been a failure among the Belgian soldiers to respond to the call of their countrymen. This consideration should have appeared to him of a nature to cause him preferably to attempt the adoption of a plan which I had advised, regarding reforms to be introduced into the administration; and at the same time to yield to the wishes of the Southern Provinces as to certain concessions which had been sought, and which were only too just.

Unfortunately, the King was swayed by old prejudices, and by his persistent and characteristic obstinacy. Enclosed in the narrow circle of his habits, his was no longer a free mind; a heavy veil seemed to conceal from it the menaces of the near future. Hesitation, irresolution, illusion, irreparable

loss of time—such was the middle course to which the King adhered, not giving thought to the fact that the Belgian revolution was at this time establishing its Government through acts of its Congress, and was rallying to its support men of hitherto disturbed and uncertain mind. His Majesty gave equally little thought to the Conference of London that was about to weigh in its diplomatic balances the errors of King William, the resources of the ancient provinces of Belgium, the importance for Europe of the maintenance of peace; and that was to proclaim the potency of accomplished deeds, in recognizing Belgium as a State separate from Holland and established as a neutral monarchy. This, in itself, gave France a special interest in the Belgian question, since the destruction of the line of fortifications raised against her by the Treaty of 1815, and the creation

of a new neutral State at her northern frontier, proved, in fact, a first blow struck at that very Treaty of Vienna, and a veritable peaceful conquest of the Revolution of 1830.

The King ended our long and fruitless interview in dismissing me with these words:

"We shall meet again; but now I must think over the important object of our discussion."

I answered His Majesty that I had prolonged my stay at The Hague with the sole purpose of being of some service to him; I begged him to be willing to give me his orders on the following morning, so that, if I could be of no use to him, I might take leave of the King during the day and hasten to reach Argenteau, where I had left my family exposed to the dangers arising from the laborers who were in a state of insurrection at Verviers.

The following morning—no news from the King! . . . In view of this, I had my post-chaise prepared, and ordered the horses for the evening. At four o'clock, dressed in my Court costume, I presented myself at His Majesty's palace at the dinner hour as usual. Dinner ended, I approached the King and asked his permission to take leave of him, stating that I was about to depart for home.

"How is that? You are abandoning me! You are leaving me!" said the King, with an air of astonishment.

"Sire, I have received no orders from Your Majesty; I am much concerned about my family, and am hastening to rejoin them."

Much moved, the King replied:

"Ah, well! God knows *when* or *where* we shall meet again!"

I went to say farewell to my excellent

host and friend, Baron Henri Fagel, whom I was never to see again! . . . He died suddenly, a short while afterward.

That very evening, I entered my post-chaise and did not descend from it until I stepped into the court-yard of the Château d'Argenteau.

XXII

WHAT had happened to affect the King, with whom I had had a *three hours'* interview on the previous evening, and who, seemingly much impressed by the turn our conversation had taken, had said to me on leaving: "We shall meet again; I have need for further reflection before deciding"?

What, I ask, had happened that on the next day there was no mention of my question . . . and that he saw me depart, without expressing any other regret than in phrases of mere politeness? . . .

On all this I was sufficiently enlightened during the morning of the very day I left. I met a certain distinguished person whom the King (as I had expected) had consulted on the subject of our interview, but with-

out mentioning my name. This person, of high rank, informed by me in advance, and not wishing, in the King's presence, to appear in full agreement with me as to the matter of Antwerp and the proclamation, had replied:

"The advice may be good, but we must examine the question seriously, etc." . . .

Whereupon the King said to this distinguished person:

"Such, also, is my opinion. Serious reflection is necessary, and I shall ponder the question further."

Events change men's situations, but do not change their character.

King William I had remained and must still remain as he was: shrewd in financial affairs, contentious, and given to detail; his mind generally undecided, meticulous, always very keen on the question of money,

and yet eternally suspicious, and naturally hesitant, when anything of importance was to be done. Lacking the statesman's insight, and a stranger to all questions involved in statesmanship, and, above all, unable to understand the spirit of the time, King William was to remain the pawn of events, ever powerless to weigh their significance.

I had occasion during my stay at The Hague again to see the Prince of Orange who, as always, evinced sentiments of affectionate consideration. I asked him how he had been affected by a letter still unanswered, which I had the honor to address to him at Vilvorde, in which I had expressed my regret at his determination to appear at Brussels, without at least trying, during his stay in that city, (then in a state of open revolt,) to seek to quiet the minds of some of the citizens, in giving

them hope through his co-operation as a mediator, etc.

His sole reply was:

"My dear friend, you know my father!"

Alas! (I have asked myself,) why did the Prince, who well knew the nature of his father, the King, take part in that unhappy action in which he was placed in charge at Antwerp, and which I am about to relate?

XXIII

On departing from The Hague, I left the King occupied, as I have said, with preparations for the attack on Brussels, thirty thousand men having been assembled under the command of Prince Frederic between Antwerp and Brussels. General Chasse occupied the citadel; the proclamation decreed by the Council was ready to be published; and all the while the States-General was in session at The Hague.

No one had any doubt concerning the success of the enterprise of the main army, and the re-establishment of the King's authority at Brussels.

The attack took place; but, being badly conducted, it was unsuccessful. The troops which had worked their way up into the

park, where fighting was going on, (as also in some of the streets) were repulsed by the volunteers of Brussels and Liége supported by the National Guard. After this defeat, the King soon had recourse to another expedient; and this, just as the session of the States-General was ending,—a session in which the Deputies of the Southern Provinces still figured to a great extent. With the citadel at Antwerp defended by the General Chasse who had played a brilliant part in the campaigns of the Empire; and with Prince Frederic at the head of an army corps of thirty thousand men ranged round the city, the King conceived the idea of sending to Antwerp the Prince of Orange clothed with extensive powers to calm and provisionally to govern the Southern Provinces.

The appointment of the Prince bore the date of the 4th of October, 1830. At the

same time a kind of ministry had been named to act as the Council for the Prince of Orange. Among the members of this ministerial body were the Duke d'Ursel; Monsieur de Lacoste, Minister of the Interior; Monsieur Van Gobbelschroy, the Minister of Public Instruction; Count Van der Duys; and Baron Capelleu, formerly the Grand Master of the Queen's Household and Governor of the Indies. These last two, who had, in a way, been designated by public opinion, did not, at that moment, have the King's assent, precisely on account of the justice that had always been rendered to their wise views on the subject of the demanded concessions, and, in general, to their opinions concerning the Government's actions. Other deputies of the Southern Provinces had also come to Antwerp on their own account, and in order to find themselves nearer the scene of events.

Of this number were Monsieur Surlet de Chokier, and the Count de Celles, who had been the King's Ambassador at Rome, in connection with the affairs of the Concordat.

This mission of the Prince Royal's might have been useful, and might even, indeed, have met with some success, had he been vested with sufficient powers. But he was far from having such authority. A strict line had been mapped out for him to follow, and as, at heart, the King preferred to make concessions to the wishes and entreaties of some of the Belgian Deputies, than to confer a very positive character on this mission (of which he expected little), the result was that the Prince of Orange soon found himself in a most intolerable position,—one which ended in his injuring himself in the eyes of members of all parties.

At this very time, the National Congress

was assembling at Brussels, or, at least, was preparing to seize the power.

And it was also at this very time that I received at my country home at Argenteau, a letter in the autograph of the Prince of Orange. The copy of this letter follows:

"I have always counted on your friendship, my dear Count, and to-day, in our present serious state of affairs, I shall ask you for a new proof of your friendship. The King invested me with great power in sending me to Antwerp, and though he has surrounded me with an Advisory Board, all of whose members were named by him, he has, however, allowed me the privilege of increasing the number of this Board by men of my own choice; and you must surely know, my dear Mercy, you were the first I thought of in this connection. You can be of great service to me. I ask you to

report to me, therefore, as soon as possible, and to accept, at the same time, the renewed assurance of my most affectionate sentiments."

(Signed) "WILLIAM, *Prince of Orange.*"

This letter came to me as a miracle, surrounded as I was by people commissioned to observe whom I saw and what I did in my retreat at Argenteau. . . . For the past fortnight a rumor had spread at Liége, to the effect that I was forwarding, by way of Maistricht, the correspondence of the Governor of Liége. Monsieur Sandberg had urged me to be on my guard, and told me that a letter addressed to him by Prince Frederic had been seized and published in the newspapers. And it was at this very time that a man, dressed as a peasant, and holding in his hand a letter bearing the coat of arms of the Prince of Orange, and

William, Prince of Orange

addressed in his autograph, appeared at the Château d'Argenteau, after having crossed the entire region of Hermalle without being stopped. The letter was the one of which I have just spoken.

I thereupon arranged to have a man on guard at the crossing on the left bank, (the road on the right bank of the Meuse no longer existed), and kept a saddle horse ready in my stables, so that, if need arose, I could reach Aix-la-Chapelle by the cross-roads.

I should certainly not have hesitated to reply to any appeal from the Prince of Orange, had I still retained any hope of being of use to him. The route through Maistricht remained open, making it possible for me to reach Antwerp through Dutch territory; the devotion which I had pledged the Prince, and which was fostered by grateful memories, placed me under

obligations to serve him; but I was convinced that I could no longer come to his aid in any way, and that he himself would only compromise his future if he persisted in prolonging his stay.

I wrote to him immediately to this effect, sending the letter by a sure route; and I added my reasons for considering his position a false one, and full of danger to himself. I entreated him to abandon it as quickly as possible, and to return to The Hague.

Unfortunately, what I foresaw did, indeed, happen. The Prince of Orange was inveigled into signing a proclamation in which he declared that he would himself head the movement in Belgium! The Prince sought thereby to make to the Belgian soldiers of the army an appeal that aimed at reuniting them under his command. This strange action, (to call it by no other

name) greatly exasperated the King, his father. The majority of the members of his Council handed in their resignations, and returned to their homes. General Chasse, in command of the citadel, was on the point of having the Prince arrested, and threatened to open fire on the city, with his cannons that stood on the ramparts.

After this deplorable course of action, (which can hardly be explained) the Prince announced that he was going to England. Was this with the idea of awaiting at London the decision of the Brussels Congress, and in the hope of being elected King of Belgium, in view of his declaration regarding placing himself at the head of the revolutionary movement in the Southern Provinces? — a proclamation for which alone the following explanation can be offered.

The King immediately turned his thoughts towards foiling his son's election, should the Congress consider his candidacy, which, indeed, was not at all probable. The plan was to compromise the Prince in Belgium. To do this, it was necessary to hinder his immediate departure for England, and to request him to present himself to the King, as soon as possible, at The Hague. The King did not confine himself to sending the Prince a most friendly invitation but he even sent the Russian Minister, Count Gourieff, to await him at the crossing of the Moerdyck, and to add his pleas to those of the King, urging the Prince to go at once to The Hague, as the King necessarily wished to speak to him before his departure for England.

On the very day of the Prince's arrival the King and his son were seen together in the public promenades, and were again

seen in the evening at the opera, where they were received with general acclamations. Thereupon they embraced one another, while the orchestra played the national air. The desired effect was accomplished: and people spoke of the Prince's treachery towards the Congress of Brussels.

Several days later, the King said to the Prince:

"Now you may go to England; it will even be well for you to go to London, as you have planned."

The Prince of Orange set off for England, leaving the King, his father, without any fear of possibly seeing his son proclaimed head of the revolutionary forces in Belgium; and of this, indeed, there had never been serious consideration at Brussels. A message addressed on the 20th of October to the States-General assembled at The Hague, announced that the Prince of Orange

had been stripped of all the titles and positions with which he had been vested; and, at the same time, his conduct at Antwerp was entirely disapproved.

XXIV

WHILE these events were taking place, the London Conference had begun its protocols. For King William, who had been called to the throne of the Netherlands by the Treaty of 1815, there was, it must be admitted, an element of humiliation, on finding himself placed by the London Conference on the same basis as revolutionary Belgium, which renounced its affiliations with Holland. Beginning with November 15, 1830, there had been a tacit recognition of the independence of Belgium, and Prince Talleyrand, French Ambassador at London, had spoken in the following terms to the Prince of Orange, when he met him at some reception:

"You have done much for the Belgians,

Monseigneur, but you have not done enough. *You should have placed the crown on your head, and we would have immediately recognized you.*"

Later, the letter of Count Orloff to King William's court at The Hague should have at last opened his eyes, and made him understand that, at that moment, the thought dominating all the Cabinets of Europe was, above all, the fear of war; and that, as far as he was concerned, the game was lost! But King William persevered, nevertheless, in his course of resistance, for which there was no longer any reason and which brought much misfortune to his country.

His recognition and direct acceptance of the eighteen articles of the London Conference would have greatly embarrassed Belgium, and would have hindered the establishment of that country, especially

in financial respects. For it would have been necessary to restore to King William the million that he had placed in the treasury in the General Society established and founded by him at Brussels. Such early liquidation of the debt would have greatly impeded, had it not entirely prevented, Belgium's ability to face her expenses.

King William's resistance, on the contrary, facilitated Belgium's first financial arrangements, and permitted the country to establish itself with King William's money, which remained in her coffers to be restored to him only long afterwards, at the time of the liquidation agreed upon and decreed between the two States.

France had, through the Ordinances of July, accomplished her revolution; the Bourbons had been overthrown and banished. The head of the Orleans branch, in the person of Louis Philippe, had just been

raised to the throne. In order to obtain the recognition of the Great Powers, he had himself tacitly recognized the Treaty of 1815. His policy was obviously and foremost to obtain the recognition of England and an alliance with her; and this was the object of Prince Talleyrand's mission to London. Then, again, the recognition of Belgium as a neutral State, would make safe the French frontiers, thus (by an infraction on this very Treaty of 1815) achieving a veritable and pacific victory for the Revolution of July.

Revolutions are (as a famous writer has said) not made, but happen. And in fact, in order for them to break forth, there must be a concurrence of many circumstances, producing a division in men's minds; and there is involved a lack of forethought on the part of Governments unable to distinguish what is just from what is

exaggerated in the complaints addressed to them, and in those demands for reparation advanced by wayward or deluded souls, seeking to overthrow the established order of things.

It is now perfectly clear that the revolution which broke forth in the Southern Provinces of the Netherlands was not merely the result of Governmental errors (although these were the chief cause), but that the radical Revolution of July in France was a necessary element translating the discontent existing in ancient Belgium into a spirit of opposition and revolt.

Does this mean that Louis Philippe's Government worked in an underhanded manner to achieve this result in its own interests, which at that time may have involved the division of the neighboring Kingdom created by the Treaty of 1815,—a Kingdom having on its French border

a line of fortresses raised against France with money obtained from contributions levied in France by the Allied armies, and constructed under the direction of the Duke of Wellington?

I am far from wishing to express such an accusation without proof.

But that later the Government of Louis Philippe had keenly observed the spirit of discontent and opposition constantly increasing in the neighboring provinces of the Netherlands; and that it adopted means to take advantage of circumstances should an uprising break out at Brussels—means tending to have such an eventuality result in a rupture between the Northern and Southern Provinces of the Kingdom of the Netherlands,—all this is by no means improbable. And I will say even more: One day, when I was at Paris, in the salon of the Minister of the Interior, I heard from

The Duke of Wellington

the lips of a *person who occupied a very high office* this recital of the revolution of Brussels: After having alluded to the riot at the close of the opera, *La Muette*, and the burning of the residence of the Minister of Justice, M. Van Maanen, my informant stated that it seemed as if the skirmish should have stopped there. On the morrow, people no longer knew just what they wanted. The National Guard, disarmed by the people, were again in arms on the following day. The illuminations prepared in connection with the celebration of the King's birthday on the 24th of August, were overturned. No one knew on that day to what purpose this orgy of the streets tended; and, "in truth," said he, "if there had been a man of any presence of mind at Brussels, and a regiment well directed, all would have ended there, and order would have been restored. But I was observing

events from afar, from the frontier, where my duties were keeping me," added this person of whom I speak; and, after having looked at the faces around him, he added these very words:

"Fortunately, I had the word of command. On the third day, the insignia of Royalty were everywhere torn down, dragged under foot: it was revolution!"

I myself had witnessed deeds such as Monsieur —— related. With my own eyes I had seen pieces of gold drawn forth from the pockets of peasants in ragged blouses. And though I admit that later I was told that Mons. —— was in the habit of boasting, still he had spoken the truth in this matter . . . as I well knew!

However these facts may have been, let me say in closing the subject, that had it not been for the bad management on the King's part, in 1825, I am convinced that

the ancient Austrian-Belgian provinces annexed to Holland in 1815 in the creation of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, could have continued united in a community of interests, despite differences of habits and customs tending to cause them to fall away. These differences arose from the fact that Belgium was essentially agricultural and industrial, with a fertile soil, and rich in many different kinds of minerals and coal mines for her great furnaces; while Holland possessed immense capital, rich colonies, and a navy which had been commanded by such Admirals as Tromp and Reuter, and whose annals were glorious in deeds of war.

From the very beginning of the union, all that would have been necessary for a happy guidance of men and affairs would have been to see, on this throne of such recent creation, a high-minded Prince, whose

administrative and political views should have been equal to the spirit of the times and to the rôle which he had been called upon to play in Europe. But, unfortunately, the Sovereign Prince who was to ascend this throne brought with him old religious and political prejudices. A Protestant and Calvinist, an ardent disciple of Gomar, the King, at heart, hated the Catholic faith; or, at any rate, deeply distrusted the Catholics of the sixteenth century. He believed that he could best combat it secretly and with some hope of success, by following the ways of Josephism; and to this end, he had appointed as his director of the Catholic cult, a former fiscal agent of Joseph II, a man of whom the authorities at Vienna were very glad to be rid.

In political matters, King William I had no understanding of what constituted cor-

dial relationships with the foreign Powers. He introduced into his diplomatic correspondence that meticulous spirit which was the key-note of his character, and which ended in begetting for him a certain enmity and distrust among the great ministries of Europe.

Becoming King of the Netherlands, after having had merely the title of Stadtholder in Holland, he cared little, in general, for names, or rank; and all his thought seemed to be directed towards preserving in the institutions of his new Kingdom all possible elements that might recall or resemble the old ways to which many enlightened men of Holland had long paid honor.

A democrat who held ideas of despotism, nothing could better depict the character of this Prince than the reply which he made when the Austrian General, the Baron de Vincent (temporary Governor-General in

the name of the Allied Powers) handed over to him the reins of the Government of the Netherlands, in 1815:

"Sire," said the General, "the country over which you have been called to reign is *essentially monarchical.* Your Majesty will find particularly in the ancient Belgian provinces a nobility attached to the country, by reason of their great territorial possessions, and, on principle, devoted to their sovereign."

"Monsieur," the King replied, "I am the *King of the people!*"

I heard this characteristic anecdote from a person having it in confidence from General Vincent himself. The General even added: "From that moment, I augured ill for the beginning of the King's reign."

I myself often had occasion to realize (both in my personal correspondence as Governor of South Brabant and in the

discharge of my duties as Grand Chamberlain) how truly the above quoted words of the King represented his inmost thought. Here is to be seen the very basis of his sentiments, particularly as displayed in his public audiences where he received everyone without making distinctions; or, rather, showing preference for people of the lowest social rank.

The Memoirs of Count Van de Duyn state that King William had preserved, or rather inherited from his ancestors, a hatred of the Bourbons. I myself am witness to the fact that he permitted the publication in Brussels (at the time when I was Governor of that province and despite my protest), of a pamphlet entitled *The Yellow Dwarf* —a veritable libel against the Bourbons, and particularly against King Louis XVIII.

Not until they attacked his own Government in the person of his Minister of Justice,

Mynheer Van Maanen, was he willing to have the authors of this libel sent beyond the rivers, in the Northern Provinces. King William was the first among the sovereigns of this period to recognize Louis Philippe's accession to the throne; and, moreover, he hastened to prohibit the entrance of the Duchess de Barry into his realm.

Louis XVIII

XXV

THE Constitution which, by virtue of the Eighteen Articles of London, should have been adopted in reuniting Belgium and Holland as the new Kingdom of the Netherlands, was an incomplete piece of work, wherein, (under the name of constitutional and representative Government,) the influence of the King sought to make the old Dutch customs prevail. This was especially true in regard to basing elections to the States-General entirely on elections in the provinces,—while the King was unwilling to have his Ministers responsible to the Chambers, as he intended to retain absolute control of the executive power just as the Stadtholders had exercised it; and not as it then existed in England, and as it had

been established in France by the events of 1814.

King William often used to say: "I should prefer to give up my throne under such conditions."

King William was an indefatigable worker. He wished to know all the details of the Administration. At four in the morning, winter and summer, he was seated in his study at his table covered with documents from his Ministers; and the most appreciated among these Ministers,—one might say the most courted—was he who sent in the most voluminous papers.

The King cared little for the Arts, and did not know much about them. On the other hand, he devoted a great deal of his time to the factories, to the study of the manufactures and finance; and we must in all justice recognize that in this respect he gave the country an impulse which sur-

vived the events that overthrew his sovereignty in the Southern Provinces.

What King William never could understand was that nations do not, any more than individuals, depend alone on material interests, but that, above all, if they are to have a future, they need moral and intellectual satisfactions.

It has been thought that his son, the Prince of Orange, professed views that were more constitutional, but this is a mistake. I have often had the honor of seeing him intimately in his family life, of which he was so fond and keenly appreciative, and whose charm resulted from the Prince's own amiability and goodness of character; and yet I have heard him speak in emphatic protest against everything that resembled the English form of government, wherein, as he said, Royal power had been annulled, and the Ministry was everything;

and he would conclude by stating, like the King, his father, that he would rather abdicate than rule under similar conditions.

Alas! under similar conditions! If they had existed, there is every reason for believing that the King of the Netherlands, (warned in time by the enterprise planned by the unfortunate Charles X, of the disorders which would ensue and which must necessarily affect Belgium) would have adopted concessions and reforms based on legitimate demands, and that thus the Kingdom of the Netherlands would have been maintained in the form wherein it had been founded in the interests of general peace.

Apart from this ill-conceived and ill-defined antipathy, based on mistaken judgment, the Prince of Orange was, without doubt, one of the most distinguished princes of Europe, by reason of his polished man-

ners, his elegant bearing, the kindliness of his character, his services in the English army in Spain, and his dashing valor at Waterloo! Regrettable, however, was a certain lightness in his character, of which advantage was taken, and that gave rise to calumnies, for which time made amends. But we should recognize that his faults were redeemed by his noble and generous sentiments, and by impulses of a sympathetic and kindly heart.

In writing these lines, I feel the desire of recalling with grateful memory the numerous marks of esteem and the friendly confidence which the Prince of Orange always showed me from the very beginning of our acquaintance, and of which, to his last day, he never ceased to give me proofs that I regard as an honor. I should have been happy if I had been able to go to him and bring him a last tribute of my respect-

ful devotion; but, unfortunately, my departure was delayed despite my efforts, and I was prevented from seeing him again. He had succumbed to an acute illness which carried him off in a few days.

XXVI

SEVERAL years passed before I was able to re-visit King William in Holland. I was staying a brief while at the Château de Loo, on the occasion of my eldest son's marriage in 1835, and I found the King unchanged in his ideas of resistance to the Conference of London. His Majesty showed much pleasure at seeing me again, but avoided conversation concerning past events; and I, for my part, had as little wish to make any allusion to those circumstances whereof events had only justified my presentiments and prophecies. The course of events which only approved my judgment were now for the King merely a lesson that had come too late. In vain he still hoped that time and the Plenipotentiaries then assembled

in conference at London might bring him some fulfillment of his desires.

Later I paid my last visit to The Hague; and this time, it was to get my dismissal from the King. He had agreed to a treaty which sanctioned the existence of the Kingdom of Belgium, and which recognized King Leopold. This Prince had, in 1812, lived at Munich, when I was there as Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary of the Emperor Napoleon. I often had the honor of receiving him at my home; and he had always graciously retained an undiminished sentiment of kindliness towards me.

Hitherto, I had refrained from presenting myself at the court of my new Sovereign, as King William had not signed the treaty involving the separation of Holland and Belgium. But now, everything was changed: the Kingdom of Belgium had been consti-

tuted; King William had not only recognized the accession of King Leopold to the throne of Belgium, but he had even nominated a Minister Plenipotentiary accredited to the King of Belgium. He had chosen Mynheer Falk, former Minister of the Interior, who, previous to that, had been accredited to England in the quality of Ambassador, and had defended the interests of the King in connection with the Conference of London.

I no longer had any reason to delay my presentation to King Leopold; and with this in mind, I first went to The Hague, for the last time, to get my dismissal from King William.

He had invited me to dine at the Palais du Bois. On arising from the table, I approached His Majesty, and, after expressing my regret at my inability to have been of greater service to him, I thanked him

for all his unfailing kindness to me. His emotion was apparent, and I myself was sincerely touched. After a moment of silence, he spoke to me, for the first time, of the past, and of the devotion I had always shown him.

"I have often regretted," said he to me, "that when you came to the wedding of the Princess Marianne, you did not arrive a fortnight earlier."

"Ah! Sire, if I had been sufficiently fortunate to have been able to inspire you with a little more confidence, the moment to which you allude would not have been badly chosen. A sense of fear and uncertainty for the future played in the minds of all; it was the psychological moment for a great deed, not by force of arms,—although you had that means in your power in the vicinity of Antwerp,—but through words of peace, of conciliation and of hope; in

short, through a radical change in your Government! . . . But let us speak no longer of those times which have now entered into the domain of the past. Permit me, Sire, to offer to you and your august family, my sincerest good wishes; and may you deign to hold me in kindly memory —an honor which I shall most highly prize."

"I hope," replied the King, "that I shall have the pleasure of seeing you from time to time. I do not yet know where I shall establish my court; but wherever I am, come directly to me, and you shall always be received as one of my own family."

Several years earlier, the Queen had died of a lingering malady.

When I took leave of the King, it was our last farewell; we were never to see each other again!

King William I lacked knowledge concerning the men and affairs of his time; he

was not really in touch with, nor did he understand, the politics of his day; and he had prejudices which greatly swayed him, interfering with his clearness of judgment. But let us recognize that to him Belgium owed the incentive given to her industrial establishments, the creation of Seraing, the General Society, and other institutions which are an honor to the country and contributed to an importance that is not to be measured by Belgium's extent on the map of Europe. The great part that she plays is due to the riches contained in her soil, to her commercial relations, to her industrial institutions, and, above all, to her exceptional position, the best guarantees of whose endurance and future are the well-understood interests of the Great Powers.

The accession of King Leopold to the new throne of Belgium was a fortunate

event for that country. He had the qualities which King William had lacked: a wide experience of men and affairs, a mind of great intelligence equal to the demands of the day. After having held a very high status as the husband of the late Princess Charlotte, he accepted the throne of Belgium when that land was issuing from a revolutionary crisis which had, as far as possible, been calmed through the labors of a Congress more intent on placing limits to Governmental power than on giving him means of action, without which he had difficulty in maintaining his position. Yet under the circumstances, on ascending to the throne of Belgium, surrounded by institutions to some extent republican and of revolutionary origin, Prince Leopold of Saxe-Coburg saved Europe from a general war, and, in especial, saved Belgium from the consequences of those inevitable excesses

which attend the overthrow of Royal Power, and the unchaining of civic passions.

Endowed with a wise and enlightened mind, with a patience that was proof against everything, with trained knowledge and perfect taste in matters of Art; an intelligent patron of Letters and of everything favorable to the industrial movement of our day, King Leopold has shown his ability to win the utmost confidence of all the Cabinets of Europe, to calm party violence, and to inspire devotion throughout the provinces of Belgium, a Kingdom which is indebted to him for its existence, its prosperity, and its future, at this time when unbridled passions are overthrowing other countries, disturbing the Orient, and menacing in general the social order.

King Leopold I of Belgium

APPENDIX

ROYAL MESSAGE

Nobles et Puissants Seigneurs:

The project of law that We herewith present to you, is a regrettable but necessary consequence of occurrences in some of the provinces of the Kingdom.

In a time of foreign and domestic peace; in the midst of prosperity in so many branches of industry; under a system of laws that are moderate, of political and civic freedom, We see a small number of our subjects, (deceived by the exaggerations, and incited by the disturbances of evilly-inspired persons,) failing to recognize all these benefits, and ranging themselves in opposition, in a most dangerous and scandalous manner, to the Government, the laws, and Our paternal designs.

The licence of the press, (that press whose greater freedom than in any other country of Europe We should have desired to assure), has unfortunately only contributed all too greatly to the spread of disquiet, discord and distrust; it has diffused doctrines as subversive of social institutions, (whatever might be the form of State Administration) as they are entirely opposed to the Government of the Netherlands established by its Fundamental Law; and opposed, also, to the rights of Our House, rights which We have never wished to

exercise in an unlimited fashion, but which, of Our own initiative, We have restrained as far as We have deemed compatible with the lasting prosperity, the customs and the character of the nation.

This press, whose constitutional liberty had as aim the diffusion of knowledge and information, has been dishonored by ill-wishers, to the extent that it has become a means of provoking dissensions, discontent, religious hatreds, the spirit of factions, of censure and revolt; and it has so attacked and undermined public tranquillity, the moral strength of the State, the free progress of the Government and the performance of public duties that it has become our grievous duty seriously to consider in common its activities, and to adopt firm measures and salutary laws, lest the prosperity of the State suffer from its attacks, and the fidelity and love of Our subjects, and their loyalty to monarchical government, modified by a constitution, be disturbed. In brief, We must see to it that in this Kingdom of the Netherlands, true liberty, law and order shall be respected and maintained.

In this connection, *Nobles et Puissants Seigneurs*, it appeared to Us necessary,—on the occasion of presenting a law tending only to assure the enjoyment of good through the suppression of evil—to make known Our personal opinion concerning the conduct of the Government of Our Kingdom.

If We fix our attention on the religious interests

of the citizens, We find, that, just as the religion which We and Our House profess after the example of Our Forefathers has for its motto, "Liberty," so have entire freedom in religious opinions, equal protection of all the faiths existing in Our Kingdom, and the free exercise of creeds sanctioned by the Fundamental Law, been constantly the object of Our particular care.

As to what concerns the Roman Catholic religion, there has been, since Our accession to the throne, no course more safe and fitting to follow than that which was observed in the glorious and justly revered reign of Maria Theresa, in those provinces of the Kingdom where the Catholic religion is professed by the majority of the people.

The arrangements which We adopted during the first years of Our reign were based on her example.

Since the conclusion of the Concordat, and the full and entire application of that agreement in those very provinces, the Roman Catholic Church has enjoyed more freedom there than ever before, and this benefit can be unceasingly assured to our Roman Catholic subjects in the other provinces, through the happy continuance of negotiations having this object in view, negotiations which enable Us to look forward to speedy appointments to bishoprics now vacant.

We congratulate ourselves on being able, moreover, to give here the assurance that Our decree of October 2nd of this year,—whose stability is guaranteed as much by Our Conventions with the

Papal Court as by Our resolute desire—has not only fulfilled all the wishes of the Holy See, in the interests of Our Roman Catholic subjects, but also that the Head of this Church, after becoming acquainted with this decree, has shown Us his appreciation of it, in declaring that "We have given to Our conventions with the Holy See all the force and impulse of good-will; that We have carried out the agreement without confusion, word for word; that We have left to the bishops the power of acting according to arrangements which We have previously sanctioned; and that Our attitude is not subject to any criticism whatsoever."

If We further consider that the affairs of the Roman Catholic faith have just been entrusted, in virtue of Our decrees, to a special administration, then We must be permitted to believe that, in this respect also, the wishes of a large number of Our people as well as Our own wishes will be fulfilled.

However, *Nobles et Puissants Seigneurs*, We do not seek to pretend that, despite the enjoyment of all these advantages, there does not exist an exaggerated religious zeal, roused by no praiseworthy aim, and maintained by pernicious influence, and but little restrained by the observations of the beneficial precepts of a religion which seeks to preserve tranquillity and rational obedience; and this zeal may yet re-act in a fatal way, and bring forth seeds of division and resistance, unless,

sooner or later, there shall be, in some form, a promulgation of doctrines and an attempt aiming to check by law the influence of a religious system on the course of the Government of the State.

But We hereby give assurance that We firmly resolve, by all means within Our power, to obviate this, and to continue to maintain the temporal authority in all its integrity; to watch constantly over the conservation of liberty among the various faiths; yet, at the same time, to see to it that all the religious communions keep themselves strictly within the limits of obedience to the laws of the State, to the end of still further guaranteeing liberty of conscience, and maintaining the laws of the Government beyond reach of encroachments by any religious authority.

If We consider the question of Education, (which the Constitution has made the special object of Our constant solicitude,) We may flatter Ourselves that We are entitled to the gratitude of the wise legislators of Our nation, for having of Our own initiative called forth the legal enactments affecting Public Instruction. Assuredly, if, on the one hand, in essentially modifying the existing dispositions, which are approved by a large number of Our subjects, We have not adopted the unlimited liberty which, in its licence, leads to confusion and to the annihilation of civilization and of intellectual development, close examination, will, on the other hand, show that in this matter the Government has given to communal and provincial author-

ities all that could be conferred by the Law; and We desire that you, *Nobles et Puissants Seigneurs*, will enlighten Us, and show Us whether through our proposals We have achieved Our aim, which is nothing but the satisfaction of the reasonable wishes of Our subjects.

Yet, *Nobles et Puissants Seigneurs*, the nation has the right to demand of Us that We show as much strength in repressing unworthy claims, as We do eagerness in welcoming the expression of sensible wishes. That firmness which is the basis of social welfare, is likewise the essential principle of Our rule, and We do not doubt that the assurance We here give of our utter repugnance to crossing the boundary line that separates necessary firmness from misplaced indulgence, will encourage good citizens, and will foil all hope of success through violence and resistance.

If We examine all Our statutes in regard to the use of the French language, We must believe that all steps have been taken which could reasonably be desired, to facilitate private transactions. If, however, We become convinced that these steps are insufficient, or might without inconvenience be extended to public transactions, We shall be disposed to modify them in a desirable manner; but We hereby add to the assurance that this object of Our consideration will be subordinated to the general situation of the nation, the further assurance that neither declarations of impetuous excitement, nor unsuitable demands, shall bring nearer

the time when We shall assent to the desires that have been expressed.

The equitable principle of the irremovability of Judges has already been consecrated by law, and it seems to Us, in view of the judiciary organization so soon to take place, that Our intervention, in this respect, is no longer necessary.

If We pause to consider the question of Ministerial responsibility,—(and it is more difficult to determine the true sense of this question than to realize why it has been brought forward)—if We take into consideration the dispositions of the Fundamental Law, which not only submits all Governmental acts exclusively to Our examination and Our decision, but also yields Us the right to regulate the nature of the obligations that We may desire to impose, under oath, on the Ministerial Chiefs of Departments to be established by Us; if, after this, We wish to examine the power entrusted to Us, and continue to take to heart the interest of Our well-beloved subjects, We do not believe that We can admit that our Ministers have, apart from their relations with Us, any responsibility besides those equally determined for them by the Fundamental Law and other existing laws. Indeed, in the constitutional existence of the State Council, and in the teaching that this Council (and not such and such Head of a ministerial department) be listened to, we find not only exclusion of the principle of Ministerial responsibility, but, further, a better guarantee for the welfare of the Belgian

people than the adoption, prior to ripe discussion, of any measure affecting their existence.[1]

The introduction of such Ministerial responsibility to the two Chambers that constitute the States-General, and to the Judiciary, would, moreover, remove the Royal prerogative, in contradiction to the Fundamental Law, from this field of action, without offering any surer guarantee for the liberties of the people. For whoever might be the individuals called upon to judge the actions of the Ministers, there would be no beneficial result, unless these judges were free from the weaknesses of humanity, and beyond its passions and errors.

The situation in the Netherlands, in this respect, is not similar to that in several other countries, where it has been possible to introduce Ministerial responsibility without inconveniences, following circumstances entirely foreign to this Kingdom, and whose absence has actuated a quite different course in its constitutional government.

Yet, on the other hand, *Nobles et Puissants Seigneurs*, We feel the need of constantly increasing the common accord by giving greater scope to the

[1] *In this paragraph is to be found the crux of the King's message. He refuses to make his Ministers responsible to the Representatives of the nation; and claims for himself the sole right to interpret the Constitution. Mercy Argenteau's report of his interview with Charles X indicates how greatly this action of the King of the Netherlands affected the King of France when he was contemplating the coup d'état which was to be followed by the Revolution of 1830.*—THE EDITOR.

official relations between the heads of ministerial departments and the two Chambers of the States-General; and the way in which Our intentions in this respect may most speedily and best be carried out, is the object of Our most serious deliberations.

The question of the conflict[1] has not escaped our attention, and as much as We desire the unhindered progress of the administrative power, We are equally desirous not to deprive (unless there be need) any of Our subjects from their recourse to the Tribunals. We propose to take this matter up again after the introduction of the Judiciary organization, when We flatter ourselves that We shall be able, in a fitting manner, to reconcile both these objects whose need is equally felt.

The privileges of the States-Provinces have also during recent years given rise to a diversion of opinion. Those authorities constituted for definite and important purposes are greatly entitled to Our confidence and Our protection. Placed between their constituencies and the Throne, they are enabled to apprize Us of the special needs of their provinces, and to make recommendations to Us regarding their interests.

In constantly observing these principles, without extending the sphere of their privileges to the general laws which are more especially submitted to the consideration of the legislative power; in limiting themselves to the objects which immediately

[1] *Between Ministers and Representatives.*

concern them, or which, as a consequence of general regulations, have particularly to do with their provinces, the States-Provinces can certainly fruitfully support, in Our presence, the true interests of their provinces and their constituencies.

Faithful to this principle, We shall show as much cordiality in listening with good-will to the propositions of the provincial authorities as We shall show firmness in preventing them from occupying themselves, (through misplaced interference and in a manner injurious to the welfare of Our subjects) with legislative power that the Fundamental Law has placed exclusively in Our hands and in the two Chambers.

As regards the inconvenience that some have seemed to discover in the arrangements of rules in regard to certain dismissals from office, the exercise of the vote, and various other civil rights, this inconvenience We have just recently obviated.

Finally, *Nobles et Puissants Seigneurs*, if We cast a glance at the financial affairs of the Kingdom, We note with satisfaction the constant decrease in expenses outside of those resulting from the establishment of constitutional institutions, legal engagements, general catastrophes and troubles in Our colonies; and We note the certainty of still greater economies. We further find that the wishes expressed for the abolition of the tax on grinding of corn have been fulfilled; and that, through a plan of legislation the public desire has been satisfied for preventing, as far as possible,

any abuses in the question of the syndicate of amortization.—In brief, *Nobles et Puissants Seigneurs*, it is in this respect that We are particularly convinced that, whatever may be the results, Our efforts for the prosperity of the nation, the decrease of its expenses, the maintenance of a well-conducted Administration and the conservation of the State's credit, will not be misunderstood either by Our contemporaries or by posterity.

Should not such a picture, *Nobles et Puissants Seigneurs*, confirm Our confidence in the providence of the God of Our Fathers, in the affection and gratitude of Our well-beloved subjects, and finally, in the constitutional co-operation by you, *Nobles et Puissants Seigneurs*, in joining Me in suppressing the evil-minded, and effectively protecting the good?

In such case, there will be no unfortunate and innocent victims of the crafty and the wicked; no evil deed will be planned, or, unpunished, carried out; union between Our citizens will be maintained without regard to religion or origin, and the liberty of all will be assured, despite the underhanded plots of some persons. Thus, under these circumstances, action in common accord with you, *Nobles et Puissants Seigneurs*, in the affirmation of social order, and liberal and firm action of the Government, will carry on to posterity and for Our House the great examples of Our Forefathers, whose wisdom and courage shielded the political, civil and religious liberties of the Netherlands

against the usurpations of a misguided mob, and the ambition of foreign dominion.

Whereupon we pray God, *Nobles et Puissants Seigneurs*, to keep you in His holy and worthy guard.

THE HAGUE,
Dec. 11th, 1829.

CIRCULAR

Addressed by the Minister of Justice to all the attorney-generals and assistant attorney-generals, to all the criminal lawyers, to all the King's attorneys and their assistants connected with the Tribunals, and to all the Heads of the police.

THE HAGUE, *December 12, 1829.*

The Royal Message, and the project of law addressed yesterday by the King to the Second Chamber of the States-General are the results of His Majesty's convictions relative to the necessity of very severe and active measures, under the circumstances in which the commonwealth finds itself, especially in certain provinces of the Kingdom.

These circumstances are clearly and thoroughly shown in these documents, where, moreover, the personal views of the King on the course of the Government of the Kingdom are unfolded.

In giving you a copy of these documents, I must, in obedience to the wishes of the King, expressly call your attention to the obligation which rests upon you, of agreeing to the governmental principles of His Majesty, as they are set forth in the aforesaid Message, and of taking them as your guide in the exercise of your functions; for it is

alone through these principles that the steady and regular progress of the Government can be assured, a progress necessary to strengthen and aid the general interests. Here and there, a lukewarm attitude has made itself only too manifest, and there have even been cases of total absence of courageous and manly preservation of the constitutional power of the King and the Government, a preservation above all obligatory on His Majesty's Officers of Justice. This may, perhaps, be attributed in part to the doctrines spread abroad through the abuses of the press, and blindly admitted by many who have not reflected on them or examined them—doctrines in opposition to the Government of the Netherlands and the rights of the King; and, in part also, to the moral oppression which the violent and evil outbursts of several newspapers have exercised on the minds of some persons in the King's employ. It is in this way that the sentiment of duty in respect to public functions has been diminished.

Now that the King himself has so clearly and thoroughly shown the principles which he considers as guiding for governing the State, and which so plainly proceed from the Fundamental Law of the Netherlands, whoever, exercising public duties, acts contrary to these principles may not, in excuse, allege that he erred in good faith, through ignorance of the King's sentiments. I am charged to recall to you expressly the obligation which rests particularly upon you as His Majesty's Officers,

not to permit any consideration whatever to turn you from the adoption and the defense of these principles, which are the basis of the social edifice in the Netherlands, and the guides of Governmental action. The King may, with the greatest right, impose the observation of these principles upon those who hold their offices from His Majesty, and who do not wish to lose them, but desire to preserve His Majesty's confidence.

Let me especially and emphatically suggest that in the future you be not deterred, for any reason whatsoever, from maintaining and carrying into execution all existing laws and rules; for His Majesty has learned that, on numerous occasions, there have been lukewarmness and neglect in this respect, and he seriously desires all who have, and wish to continue to have, the honor of public office, to show themselves worthy thereof through their zeal in having the laws respected, and in maintaining and assuring peace and order.

In so strongly reminding you of your obligations, the King has no intention of violating the liberty of your sentiments and opinions. It is one to which, like every other liberty, public officials are as much entitled as are private citizens. But when this liberty takes on a blameworthy tendency fatal to the State, leading to the neglect of duties, and to opposition to the paternal views of the King, His Majesty deems himself obliged, in the public interest, to withdraw his confidence from those public officials who show themselves unable

to follow and adopt the principles which the King, in the aforesaid Message, has expressly declared to be the rules of his Government.

I therefore invite you to reflect soberly on the contents of this circular and the Royal Message appended thereto, and request you to inform me, during the two days following their reception, whether or not you are prepared to follow the course therein indicated, and without allowing yourself the least deviation, but with all zeal, confidence and firmness, without which it would be impossible effectually to conserve our country and protect its peaceful citizens against the perverted attempts of the evil-disposed.

The Minister of Justice
(*Signed*) VAN MAANEN.

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